

# THE JESSE JAMES STORIES

## A WEEKLY DEALING WITH THE DETECTION OF CRIME

*Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.*

**No. 30.**

**Price, Five Cents.**



"YES, BILL WOODS, I AM JESSE JAMES, AND YOUR LITTLE GAME IS UP!" CRIED THE GREAT OUTLAW AS HE FACED THE ROBBER CHIEF.—(CHAPTER CXVIII.)



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No. 30.

NEW YORK, November 30, 1901.

Price Five Cents.

# Jesse James' Exploits.

By W. B. LAWSON.

## CHAPTER CXIII.

### THE TRAITOR'S PLOT.

"Jesse James is in Wyoming."

"So I have heard."

"And you want to capture him, dead or alive?"

"There is money for the man who captures him."

"I am not here for my health."

"There is reputation as well as money in the job?"

"Yes."

"You want reputation, I want money. Suppose we work together."

"What do you mean?"

"That we can capture Jesse James, dead or alive."

"That is easier said than done. How do you know we can capture him?"

"I will explain, if you agree to my proposition."

"What is your proposition?"

"There is a reward of ten thousand dollars for the man who captures Jesse James, dead or alive. I want that money. There is a big reputation to be made by the capture. Work with me, and if we are successful you get the reputation, I get the money. Is it a bargain?"

"It is. The reputation will be worth more than ten

thousand dollars to me. You can have all the rewards. Tell me your plan."

"You will protect me?"

"Dick Strong always keeps his word. You trust me."

"Then I will tell you my plan."

Dick Strong had just been elected sheriff of Cheyenne, Wyoming. He had opened an office in the back room of the "Old Pard" saloon, but at the same time the vigilantes and the miners had been doing all the work, except calling in the coroner and summoning jurors for inquests. His reputation as an officer was yet to be made.

Strong had been a prospector, a miner, and a saloon-keeper. In every deal he had been as square as a man, which meant that he had no unfair advantage of any one.

He had been a resident of the territory for many years and in that time had "planted" many mines. He had killed them all in defense of his own rights.

He was known as a dead shot, and he had never flinched in a scrimmage.

When a semblance of government was established at Cheyenne, a fearless man who was quick on the trigger was wanted for sheriff.



Dick Strong seemed to fill the bill, and he was elected without opposition.

Cheyenne had a jail, and Sheriff Strong was just the man to keep it filled, if he could get to the robbers and murderers ahead of the vigilantes.

He was well known to all the desperadoes in the vicinity of Cheyenne, and for a few days after his election they kept quiet. None of them cared to meet him in single combat. They knew if he started out to arrest them, he would do it, or add another grave to his private cemetery.

Sheriff Strong was alone in his office one morning, when a stranger pushed open the door and walked in unannounced.

The stranger introduced himself as Bill Woods, a prospector.

He was dressed in the style of that locality—woolen shirt, thick trousers, high boots and a broad slouch hat.

In the belt around his waist the stranger carried two revolvers of large caliber.

After his brief introduction, the stranger took a chair, and, in a quiet, matter-of-fact way, announced that Jesse James was in Wyoming.

Sheriff Strong had already learned that the great law and his gang had located in the vicinity of Cheyenne; in fact, he had an idea they were right down at that time, so he was not startled by the statement of Mr. Woods. He had suspected the moment the alleged prospector had entered that he was in reality a member of the

Strong watched his visitor very closely, but after he proceeded to unfold his plan for the capture of the great bandit.

"Member of the James gang," said Woods. "For the purpose of arranging a plan to capture the leader. This is the first opportunity I have to carry out my plan."

"Grudge against Jesse?"

"I had a little love affair of mine once, and I don't soon forget those things. I want a chance to get even with him, but it is for the good I am working for."

"Wanting to betray him?"

"Not at all, but I will give you information that will enable you to capture him with a good posse. I will get all the credit, and collect the reward

"You say you joined the gang in order to get a chance to bring about his capture?"

"Yes."

"You joined the gang in Missouri, I believe?"

"Yes."

Sheriff Strong took a scrapbook from his desk and looked at it for a moment; then he continued:

"You were with the James boys at the Blue Cut train robbery, and again at Glendale. You were also in the Minnesota raid. There is a standing reward of one thousand dollars for your arrest and delivery to the sheriff of any county in Missouri, and five hundred dollars reward for you in Minnesota."

"Let me explain about those affairs," and the outlaw began to shift uneasily in his seat.

"No explanations necessary, Mr. Woods," said Sheriff Strong, quietly. "I only wanted to make sure that I knew the man with whom I am dealing. Go on with your plan, but let me say to you first that I know your record, and it will be well for you not to attempt any double-dealing with me. You propose to betray your leader for the reward. You have my word that I will not molest you so long as you act square with me. Go on."

Bill Woods winced, and shifted uneasily in his seat under the steady glance from the clear gray eyes of Sheriff Strong, but he went on with the details of his plan for the capture of Jesse James:

"The eastbound stage from Cheyenne, next Thursday, will carry one hundred thousand dollars in gold dust and bullion *en route* to the mint at Denver. Jesse has planned to rob that stage as it passes through Dead Man's Gulch. He has looked over the ground, and selected the spot where the stage will be held up. I will be in command of the men he has detailed to guard the road, while he and Frank and five others rob the stage. The men who will be with me will do as I tell them; they are tired of Jesse's leadership. You can put some men on the stage, and then, with a strong posse, you can surround the gang in the gulch, and capture them all. I will see to it that the men with me run at the first fire from your posse, and get out of the way. If possible, I will put blank cartridges in the revolvers of Jesse and his brother Frank. What do you think of the plan?"

"A very good one, if the James boys do not distrust you."

"They have perfect confidence in me."



"You are sure they have planned to rob the stage?"

"Yes; a member of the gang will be among the passengers. He will give a signal when the stage reaches the place where the robbery is to take place."

"I will consider your plan. Come back to-morrow, and I will give you some instructions, if I decide to act on it."

Bill Woods turned and left the room, a smile of triumph on his face.

But he stopped suddenly outside, with an exclamation of startled surprise.

He had found himself face to face with a handsome young man, whose flashing black eyes seemed to be looking him through and through.

The young man was much better dressed than the average miner or prospector, but a big slouch hat was pulled low over his forehead.

"So you have turned traitor, have you, Bill Woods? A pretty plot is this you have made to capture Jesse James, the man who had many times saved you from prison and the gallows. But the plot will fail. Jesse James shall know he has a traitor in his camp."

"Who are you?" exclaimed Woods, as his hand sought the butt of one of his pistols.

With a smile, the young man removed his slouch hat, and a mass of wavy black hair fell down over his shoulders.

The outlaw's pistol dropped to his side, and he sprang back with a look of terror in his eyes. In a hoarse whisper, he exclaimed:

"Calamity Jane!"

## CHAPTER CXIV.

### THE CAMP OF THE OUTLAWS—A GAME OF CARDS.

"Boys, if there is any gold in Wyoming, we'll find some of it, and while we are waiting to strike paying rock we've got the best camp of any band of prospectors in the territory."

Jesse James surveyed his camp and his men with a smile of satisfaction as he uttered these words.

He was certainly right about the camp, and there were few men living who would have disputed his assertion that if there was gold in Wyoming he and his men would find some of it.

After a long, hard journey, during which there

were few stops for rest or sleep, Jesse James and his outlaws had arrived in the vicinity of Cheyenne from Deadwood.

They had left all pursuers far behind, and more, had completely thrown them off their trail, so that, for a while at least, they were safe from molestation. They could now afford to take a much-needed rest without fear of having to fight or run at a moment's notice.

The outlaws believed they were at last in a locality where they were entirely unknown, except by reputation, and they expected to be able to accomplish considerable profitable work before their real identity was discovered.

They had been most fortunate in finding a camping-place. A small stream of clear, cold water ran through the center of a narrow gulch, bounded on both sides by high overhanging cliffs.

Green grass in abundance along both banks of the stream afforded excellent grazing for the horses.

The entrance to the gulch was by a bridle path, along the bank of the brook, so narrow that two horses could not walk abreast.

On one side, near the middle of the gulch, the overhanging cliff formed a natural roof which protected the camp from sun and rain.

Along both banks of the little stream, almost the entire length of the gulch, there were faint outcroppings of gold ore.

Prospectors had been there before them, and decided that the veins were not worth working, but that did not matter to them.

The few particles of gold visible in the rock gave them an excuse for being there, and when ready for active work they knew how to find richer veins.

The country was full of miners and prospectors, and, to allay suspicion, the outlaws went to Cheyenne and purchased a few tools and a quantity of provisions.

Then they gave out the news that they were a party of prospectors from Dakota, who proposed to work the abandoned claims in this gulch.

Miners who had been there before them laughed at their folly, and then no one paid any further attention to them for a time.

For a week the outlaws remained quietly in their camp, resting and getting familiar with the surrounding country. They were not altogether so idle as they appeared to be, for they managed to pick up



much valuable information about the movements of the stage coaches and the amount of gold they usually carried out of Cheyenne on their eastern trips.

Jesse James had returned to camp from a prospecting tour, as he called it, and, calling his men around him, he informed them that he had located a mine. He had been to Cheyenne, and had picked up a lot of information about the schedule of the eastbound stages, and the amount of gold they carried on each trip.

Then he had followed the stage road for a dozen miles, carefully noting the lay of the land, and had selected a place where the next heavily-laden stage could be easily held up and relieved of its valuable freight.

"Boys, I've arranged a little job for you, now that you have had a good, long rest. There'll be something like one hundred thousand dollars in it, and it will be just as easy as finding that much coin in the road."

"Good! good!" cried the outlaws, in chorus.

"You are the best prospector in Wyoming," exclaimed Dick Little.

"Well, chase up your tools, boys; there is always a possibility of hard work. The richer the vein, the more work we must expect. I want every man to have his tools in order. We must meet the east-bound stage in Dead Man's Gulch on Thursday."

There were more exclamations of delight from the outlaws, who had gathered close around their leader. They were all weary of inactivity, now that they were fully rested from their long, hard ride from Dakota.

## CHAPTER CXV.

### CALAMITY JANE.

If the ghosts of all his victims had suddenly risen up and confronted him, Bill Woods could not have been more startled, or worse frightened, than he was when he recognized Calamity Jane by her long black hair and flashing eyes.

"Perdition! You here!" exclaimed the outlaw, "I thought you had left the West for good."

"And the wish was father to the thought, I have no doubt," answered Calamity Jane, quietly.

"What are you doing here?"

"In Cheyenne, or in the sheriff's office?"

"Both."

"I am in business in the town. I saw you sneak-

ing into Dick Strong's office, and suspecting it was for no good purpose, I put on my disguise and followed you. I got here in time to overhear your traitorous plot."

"What devilish purpose brings you back to the West? Is your thirst for blood still unsatisfied?"

"I have no thirst for blood. You know I never harmed a human being, except in defense of my life and honor, and to avenge a great wrong. The devils who committed that wrong are all dead. I want no more blood, but I love the excitement of the West."

"No; the devils, as you call them, are not all dead. One of them escaped your vengeance. He lives to avenge his companions."

A terrible look came into the eyes of Calamity Jane at these words.

"You tell me one of those men yet lives?" she cried, clutching Woods by the arm.

"Yes, one of them lives, and I can prove it."

"Where is he? Tell me his name, and I will give you ten thousand dollars."

"I'm not helping you commit any more murders."

"Don't use that word again," hissed Calamity Jane, through her clinched teeth, and her right hand sought the butt of a silver-mounted revolver.

"I shall not tell you the man's name, at least not now. I may some time, and I am the only person living who can tell you who he is. Don't forget that."

"I think I understand your game now, Bill Woods. You are playing for high stakes. First, you would betray Jesse James. Now you want to hold a threat over me; but I tell you the game will not work. You do not hold the winning cards. I do not believe the man lives, and Jesse James shall be warned of your treachery in time."

"The man who guided the vigilantes to the hiding-place of your foster-father is alive."

"You lie!"

"You think so now, but, at the proper time, I shall prove what I say. Until then, Calamity Jane, adieu."

Bill Woods turned and hurriedly left the office, leaving Calamity Jane alone.

Then he mounted his horse and rode rapidly away to the camp of the outlaws.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I wonder if that scoundrel was telling the truth?"



A thoughtful, puzzled look came over the face of Calamity Jane when she was left alone near the office of Sheriff Strong.

"Twelve of them are out of the way. Could there have been thirteen? It is an unlucky number. The scoundrel may be right. There may be one more. If there is, I shall find him soon, and then my work will be done. But first I must find Jesse James and warn him. He has been a true friend to me. He shall not fall a victim to this scoundrel's treachery, if I can prevent it, and I think I can."

A strange woman and a strange feature of the wild life of the far West was Calamity Jane. She had found her old father, and the two had become reconciled after she believed her work of vengeance was done. She had gone East with him to a comfortable home in civilization, but her wild and adventurous spirit soon wearied of her new and peaceful surroundings. She longed for the wild, free life of the far West again, where she could be free from restraint and conventionalities.

Her father died suddenly one day, and she was again alone in the world. He left her property and money enough to make her comfortable for life, but she sold the property, and, turning her back on civilization, plunged again into the wild whirlpool of Western adventure and excitement.

In Cheyenne, Calamity Jane found a number of old friends, and she opened a faro bank. Her old-time luck had not deserted her, and few men ever left her table winners. In fact, the miners called her gambling-house "Calamity Hall."

Every night Calamity Jane could be found at the tables in her gambling-house dealing faro. She always dealt a fair game—the heaviest losers admitted that—and her tables were well patronized.

Murderers, thieves and stage robbers, as well as miners and prospectors, were gathered in Calamity Hall every night in large numbers, but, rough as the crowd was, there was never any disorder.

Every man in the room knew the reputation of Calamity Jane, the slender, dark-eyed woman who sat at the dealer's table. A glance from her flashing black eyes, a movement of the slender white hands toward the butts of the silver-mounted revolvers in

her belt, was enough to quell any attempt at a disturbance.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bill Woods found the James boys in camp when he returned.

The outlaw leaders looked at Woods suspiciously, but said nothing. He avoided them as much as possible, and managed to whisper a few words in the ears of Ned Stanley, Clel Miller, and two other members of the band, who had agreed to aid him in the betrayal of Jesse to the authorities.

An hour before sundown Woods slipped quietly out of camp, and rode away in the direction of Cheyenne.

He was followed in a short time by Stanley, Miller and the other members of the band who had been taken into his plot.

A mile from camp the traitors met in a secluded spot, and their leader revealed his plans.

"There is a little job that must be disposed of to-night," said Woods, "to insure the success of our plan to get rid of Jesse James. Calamity Jane is in Cheyenne. She has discovered our plot by accident, and will warn Jesse in time, if she is not put out of the way. She is running a faro bank. We will go in there to-night and start a fight. In the excitement I'll send a bullet through the brain of the she-devil, and make sure that she does not interfere with our work."

"Would you shoot a woman?" asked Ned Stanley.

"That woman has sent twelve men to their graves, and she is now planning to kill another. Is she entitled to any mercy?"

"We'll start the row, cap, but you must attend to the woman. Understand, we don't take any hand in that," said Clel Miller.

An angry frown distorted the face of Woods, but he said nothing.

After giving his men instructions, the outlaws separated. They were to enter the town separately, and from different directions, to meet at Calamity Hall at a certain hour.

Before starting for town, Woods assumed a careful disguise. He did not wish to be recognized by Calamity Jane that night.



## CHAPTER CXVI.

## A MYSTERIOUS WARNING.

A blaze of light from a score of kerosene lamps illuminated Calamity Hall at nine o'clock that night.

Miners, prospectors and gamblers were seated around the tables in the room playing poker.

At the big deal table in the rear faro was being dealt, and the table was piled high with chips and gold. There was little noise, except the ceaseless rattle of chips and an occasional oath from a miner, who had lost his last ounce of gold dust.

A stranger was dealing faro. Calamity Jane was not visible, and the regular patrons of the place wondered why she was not present.

A tall, rough-looking man, with a heavy black beard, entered the place, and looked around as if in search of some one. His eyes scanned the faces of the men around the card tables, and he noticed that a stranger was dealing faro.

A look of angry impatience passed over the face of the stranger, but he spoke to no one.

A few moments later two other strangers entered the place, and glanced around as if expecting to meet some one. They noticed the tall man with the heavy black beard, and then they seated themselves at a table and ordered drinks.

Two other men came in presently, and stood near the door searching the room with their eyes.

The man with the black beard approached, and said something to them in a low tone.

Then the three men moved idly about the place, all the time watching the door back of the faro table.

The tall man, with the heavy black beard, was Bill Woods, the outlaw, in disguise. The four men who had entered the place later were his confederates.

Woods was standing in the midst of a crowd of miners, watching an interesting game of poker, when a voice that appeared to be right at his ear, said in a low tone:

"I have found the man."

The outlaw started and looked around. No one appeared to have spoken to him. Every man around him was apparently watching the game closely. He did not recognize a single face in the crowd.

Woods turned to watch the game again.

In a moment the same mysterious voice spoke again.

"You were right. There were thirteen of them. The days of the last of them is numbered."

The outlaw turned pale, and moved away from the table, closely scanning the faces of the men around him. None of them had, apparently, heard the low-spoken words.

The voice seemed to come from some invisible source.

Bill Woods was trembling, and perspiration had started out on his forehead.

Only one person in the world, except himself, could have understood the meaning of the words he had just heard, and that person alone could have spoken them.

The outlaw was a coward at heart. He was thoroughly frightened, but his terror had made him desperate.

He moved about the room, mingling with the throng of miners, but all the time watching the faces of those around him.

Suddenly he stopped still, and his hand dropped to the revolvers in his belt.

"Stop!. I have you covered. Move a hand and I will shoot you dead where you stand."

A slender young man, who was better dressed than the others in the place, had come face to face with the outlaw.

Despite the male attire, Woods had recognized Calamity Jane.

Instinctively he had reached for his revolver.

Then came the warning command to stop. It was given in a tone so low that only the man for whom it was intended heard.

The order was obeyed. A small silver-mounted revolver was in the hand of Calamity Jane. Its muzzle was pointed straight at the heart of the outlaw, and a slender white finger was on the trigger.

"I understand your game, Bill Woods, and I know you now. I will meet you in Dead Man's Gulch. I shall be a passenger on the eastbound stage next Thursday."

Keeping the outlaw covered with her revolver, Calamity Jane moved away, and was lost in the crowd about the gaming tables before the outlaw could say a word.

The meeting and the dramatic scene that followed had attracted no attention. Most of those present were too much interested in the games of chance



going on around them to notice an ordinary interruption.

With a muttered oath Woods turned on his heel and walked away. He hunted up his companions, and spoke a few words to them. They soon left the place, but Woods remained behind.

Half-an-hour later, the outlaw noticed a tall, well-built man moving slowly about the room. The newcomer was also disguised, but Woods easily recognized Jesse James.

Confident that the outlaw leader could not penetrate his disguise, Woods decided to remain and watch Jesse for a while. He fell in close behind him, and followed him from table to table.

"There is a shadow on your trail to-night, old man," Woods chuckled to himself, as he watched his leader, "and that shadow proposes to find out what you are up to."

Jesse James seated himself at one of the tables, and was about to join in a game of poker when he felt a light touch on his shoulder.

"Don't play to-night! You are in danger!"

The words were spoken so low that only the bandit chief heard them. He wheeled around like a flash to face the speaker.

A slender young man stood near him.

"Meet me here to-morrow! I will warn you of your danger!" said the same low voice.

"Who are you?"

"Calamity Jane."

Jesse James was about to utter an exclamation of astonishment, but, placing her finger on her lips as a signal for silence, Calamity Jane moved away without another word.

A few minutes later Jesse James quietly left the place, and, mounting his horse, started back to camp.

## CHAPTER CXVII.

### BILL WOOD'S PLOT.

Bill Woods and the four men who had agreed to join him in the attempt to bring about the capture of Jesse James did not return to the camp of the outlaws.

They had become aware that they were regarded with suspicion by their leader and the members of the band who had been true to him.

It would not be safe for them to remain longer. They knew very well what their fate would be if

Jesse James was convinced they intended to turn traitors and found them again in his camp.

Bill Woods was at heart a scoundrel of the worst type. He had long hated and feared Jesse James, and had secretly planned to succeed him as leader of the band of outlaws.

Woods thought the spoils of the raids and robberies should be divided equally among the members of the band. He objected to the James boys always taking the lion's share.

But there was another reason for the outlaw's enmity toward his chief.

On one of the raids of the gang in Missouri, Woods wanted to abduct a pretty girl, the daughter of a farmer, and force her to live with him.

Jesse James learned of his intentions, and gruffly threatened to blow his brains out if he attempted anything of the kind.

It was the proud boast of the James boys that they nor any member of their band had ever harmed a woman.

Woods was a brute who had no respect for womanhood, and he resented the interference of Jesse with his plan, but dared not say so openly.

The meeting between Jesse James and Calamity Jane, in the latter's gambling room, had been seen by Woods.

He overheard the warning given the outlaw chief by the woman who had been a true friend to him in times past.

Woods knew that he must act quickly. If Jesse James learned from Calamity Jane of his intended treachery, Wyoming would not be large enough for both of them.

The one who got the drop would remain. The other would pass in his checks.

There was another reason why he must put his plans into force as soon as possible. He had reason to fear Calamity Jane quite as much as Jesse James. The woman was a relentless enemy. No one knew this better than Bill Woods.

In cunning and courage she was more than his equal. She had already foiled his plan to murder her in cold blood.

Woods had shadowed Jesse James back to camp from the gambling-house. Then he hurried back to Cheyenne to meet his confederates. He had business of importance with them.

Ned Stanley had been a cattle thief and rustler in



Colorado, Dakota and Wyoming before he went to Missouri and joined the James gang to escape the vigilantes.

A number of his former confederates in crime were operating in and around Cheyenne at this time. They were without a leader, and Woods had decided to take them into his band. They were all desperate characters, and, with Jesse James out of the way, Woods believed he would be able to organize a band of outlaws that no officer in the West would dare attack.

Stanley was commissioned to find his old friends, and induce them to become members of the Woods gang.

Woods gave the other men instructions, when and where to meet him again, and also gave them a general outline of his plans for a week ahead. He also warned them to keep out of sight of the James boys.

Then he left them, and, taking a room at one of the cabins called hotels, he set about preparing for the carrying out of his plan to capture Jesse James.

When Woods appeared on the streets of Cheyenne, the following morning, he was so carefully disguised he was confident neither Calamity Jane nor Jesse James could recognize him.

For several hours he loitered about the entrance to Calamity Hall. He was watching to see if Jesse kept his appointment to meet Calamity Jane.

When he saw a man disguised as a prospector, just arrived from the East, he knew the bandit chief would soon learn of his treachery.

Two hours later Woods again visited Sheriff Strong at the latter's office.

The sheriff received him rather coolly.

"I have come to arrange our plans for the capture of the James boys," said the outlaw. "We can catch them in the act of robbing the stage."

"I have decided to have nothing to do with you or your plan," said Sheriff Strong, quietly.

Woods was puzzled by the sudden change in the sheriff.

"It will be an easy job," he said.

"Possibly, but I decline to have anything to do with it."

"It will give you a great reputation."

"That I have already."

"I will divide the reward with you."

"No: I shall have nothing to do with you or your

plan, and you had better not come here again. As a sworn officer of the law, I might have to arrest you for murder and robbery in Missouri. If you want a word of friendly advice, I will tell you that it will be a good plan for you to leave Cheyenne without delay. While you are playing the shadow on Jesse James, there is a shadow on your trail."

Woods turned pale, but made no reply. He was thinking of a time when a woman, or rather a young girl she was then, had sworn a terrible oath of vengeance, and he knew how well the oath had been kept. He did not need to ask the identity of the shadow that was on his trail, and would follow him like a relentless fate.

Dick Strong was watching the face of the outlaw closely, and he smiled as he saw that his words had struck home.

With an air of bravado, which he did not feel, Woods turned and left the office.

## CHAPTER CXVIII.

### IN DEAD MAN'S GULCH.

When Cheyenne Pete, whose fame as a stage-driver, was second only to that of Colorado Charley, mounted his box to start on the regular trip east on Thursday morning, following the events just related, he was aware that something unusual was to be connected with the trip in some way.

He knew that the express company's boxes contained one hundred thousand dollars in gold dust and bullion, and that the guard was to be doubled, four armed men accompanying the treasure instead of two, but that did not account for the unusual number of mysterious passengers.

One of the first passengers to get aboard was Sheriff Dick Strong, and he was followed by four heavily-armed men, who were known to act as his deputies on special occasions.

Then there were a few miners who had saved a pile of dust, and were returning to their homes in the East.

Shortly before leaving-time, a tall, broad-shouldered man, who looked to be a prospector, not long in the West, got aboard, and following him came a very slender, delicate-looking man, who wore a black slouch hat pulled down over his eyes.

Cheyenne Pete noticed that the last two passengers seemed especially well provided with arms.



Their arsenals included an assortment of pistols and bowie-knives.

"I guess there's fun ahead, but, as it's not my business to ask questions, I'll just wait until it begins," said the grizzled driver to himself.

Cheyenne Pete had been a pony mail rider, a government scout, cowboy and miner, before he began stage-driving. His thrilling adventures and narrow escapes from death would fill several volumes. He was cool and fearless under all circumstances, and many times his nerve and daring had saved the stage from robbers.

Pete noticed that Sheriff Strong and all the armed men rode inside, while the miners and other ordinary passengers were given the seats on top of the stage.

Before the order to start was given, the windows were covered with faded calico curtains, so that it was impossible to see from the outside, if there were any passengers in the coach.

With a grim smile, in anticipation of a lively time, Cheyenne Pete gathered up his reins and shouted to his horses. They knew his voice, and, like a flash, they were off in a swinging gallop.

Ten miles were covered in less than an hour, and nothing had happened.

Dead Man's Gulch was reached, and along the narrow and dangerous trail Pete held his horses to a walk.

After a mile of tortuous windings, gulch and trail broadened, and a long stretch of down grade began. Here the driver tightened his reins, and the horses started into a smart trot.

"Whoa, there! Now, for the fun!"

With a sudden and powerful jerk, that almost threw them on their haunches, Cheyenne Pete pulled up his horses.

Fifty feet ahead the trail was completely blocked by a pile of stones. There was no chance to drive around or over the obstruction.

"Up with your hands, Pete, and stay where you are until we interview your passengers!"

A dozen armed men sprang from the rocks, and chaparral, as Cheyenne Pete brought his team to a standstill.

They had him covered. He held up his hands without a word, and the passengers on the top of the stage followed his example.

"What have you got inside?" asked a tall man, who appeared to be the leader of the robbers.

"Go in and see for yourselves," answered Pete.

"Just what we are going to do, but you want to be a little more polite in talking to gentlemen."

The tall outlaw advanced toward the rear of the stage.

Not a sound had been heard from those inside the stage, and the driver was beginning to wonder what the game was.

Two of the robbers kept the men on top and the driver covered, and the others followed their leader toward the door.

"Hello in there! Put up your hands, and get out!"

There was no movement in response to this order, and one of the robbers advanced and threw open the door.

"Come out, and be d——d quick about it. I am Jesse James, the Prince of Road Agents, and I won't stand any nonsense," shouted the man, who was acting as leader of the robbers.

"You are a liar, a coward and a traitor."

Quick as a flash a man had leaped from the stage, and stood facing the robber chief, a cocked revolver in each hand.

"Jesse James!"

The pistol in the hand of the leader of the robbers fell to the ground from his nerveless hand, as he uttered the name of the great bandit chief.

"Yes, Bill Woods, I am Jesse James, and your little game of playing as my rival of the road is up."

At the first mention of the dreaded name of the great outlaw chief, the other would-be robbers turned and fled.

They did not run a moment too soon.

Half a score of armed men suddenly leaped from the stage, and fired a volley at the flying figures without effect.

Bill Woods was thoroughly frightened by the sudden and unexpected appearance of Jesse James. He expected to be shot dead by the man he had sought to betray.

"You can go now, but leave the horse you stole from me, or I'll turn you over to the sheriff here as a horse thief," said Jesse to the trembling wretch in front of him. "I shall meet you again to settle the score between us."

Vaguely realizing that he was to be allowed to escape with his life, Bill Woods turned and fled without a moment's delay.



By the time Sheriff Strong and his men recovered from their astonishment and realized that they were really face to face with the great bandit chief, that individual had them covered with his revolvers.

With a smile, Jesse said:

"Gentlemen, you had better follow those robbers at once or they will escape."

The sheriff and his men saw at a glance that it would be folly to attempt to arrest Jesse James, so they promptly acted on his suggestion, and started in pursuit of Bill Woods and his men.

With a smile, Jesse turned to the four guards, and told them they could clear the road and let the stage proceed.

They at once went to work removing the pile of stones, leaving the stage unguarded. Their work was almost completed, when half-a-dozen men suddenly appeared on the scene.

In an instant the four guards were covered by the pistols of the newcomers.

Several of the latter leaped into the stage, and threw out the boxes containing the gold. In a twinkling they were rifled of their contents.

"You can go on with the stage, Pete," said Jesse James, with a smile, when the robbery was complete.

"D——d if that don't beat me," was all that Cheyenne Pete could say, when he realized the cunning with which Jesse James had planned for his own men to appear on the scene at the right moment and secure the treasure.

## CHAPTER CXIX.

### IN LEAGUE WITH THE WYOMING REGULATORS.

When Bill Woods realized that he was to be allowed to get away with his life, he lost no time in going.

The outlaw was thoroughly frightened when he found himself face to face with the man he had tried to betray to the officers.

He had learned, as he thought, that Jesse and his men had decided to abandon the proposed stage robbery in Dead Man's Gulch. He did not discover until too late that Jesse had purposely given out that information, where he knew it would reach the ears of the renegade.

Then Woods decided to rob the stage himself with the aid of the little band of desperadoes he had gathered about him.

He would operate on the reputation of his former leader. He thought no one in that section knew the great bandit chief by sight, and he concluded that the mention of the dreaded name would be sufficient to cause the passengers and guards to submit to being robbed without any attempt at resistance.

But other plans had been arranged while the renegade outlaw had been scheming to get possession of the one hundred thousand dollars in gold.

When Jesse James told Woods to go, that individual gave his men a signal, and in a moment they had disappeared into the chaparral brush to the right of the trail.

Their horses were tied nearby, and, at a few bounds, they were in the saddle.

"We must get out of this in a hurry," Woods cried to his men.

This was hardly the course they expected of their new leader, who had so often boasted that he only wanted an opportunity to down Jesse James, but they were all too much frightened by their narrow escape to discuss the matter then.

When Sheriff Strong, his deputies and the guards started in pursuit of Woods and his men at the suggestion of Jesse James, which suggestion was emphasized by his cocked revolvers, the would-be stage robbers had already reached their horses.

The officers were on foot. When they reached the spot where the outlaws had mounted their horses, they realized that farther pursuit would be useless.

They stopped a moment to discuss the situation.

"Seems to me we had better get back to the stage," suggested one of the stage guards.

"Jesse James is not the kind of man to walk off and leave one hundred thousand dollars, when it is lying around without any one to watch it."

"Just what I was thinking," said Sheriff Strong.

The officers hurriedly retraced their steps.

As they approached the place where they left the stage, they heard the sound of flying hoof-beats.

Rushing forward they were just in time to catch a glimpse of a small band of horsemen galloping away in the direction of Cheyenne. Jesse James and his men had turned back on the trail, and were riding straight to their camp with the gold the stage company had contracted to deliver safely in Denver.

The officers ran toward the stage, with a vague



idea that something had happened during their absence.

"You fellows are the biggest clumps in Wyoming," said Cheyenne Pete, who sat on his box as quietly as if nothing unusual had occurred.

"What's the matter, Pete?" asked Sheriff Strong.

"Nothing now, as the little boy said after the cow ran over him; it's what happened a while ago that hurts."

"What do you mean?"

"Look inside, if you can't guess."

Sheriff Strong and his men ran to the stage door, and looked in.

The strong boxes in which the gold had been packed were all scattered over the bottom of the stage. They were empty.

"Who did this?" asked Dick Strong, with a trace of excitement in his voice.

"Jesse James, I guess, the real Jesse, too," replied the veteran stage-driver, quietly.

"Not alone?"

"No; his men helped him."

"His men? Where were they?"

"Hid in the chaparral on the other side of the trail. They came up like a brood of prairie chickens at the call of the hen, when Jesse sent you fellows trooping off there on a wild-goose chase after his rival, the bogus bandit."

"Damnation!"

This was the mildest word Dick Strong could think of to express his chagrin at having been so cleverly and easily outwitted by the bandit.

"A pretty sum this day's work will cost the stage company," remarked Cheyenne Pete, whose first thought was always of the interest of his employers.

As for the guards, whose duty it had been to protect the treasure with their lives, if necessary, they had nothing to say. They knew they had lost their positions.

Every one in the party quickly realized that they could do nothing to remedy what had been done.

The outlaws were gone, and the gold with them. That was all there was to it.

Dick Strong swore he would catch them and recover the money, but that was easier said than done.

This was his first experience with the James boys and their gang, and he was compelled to admit that it had not been a pleasant or profitable one.

As soon as the trail was clear, Cheyenne Pete gathered up his reins and prepared to start. The mails had been left undisturbed, and they must be carried through.

The crestfallen guards climbed into the stage. Sheriff Strong and his men decided to return to Cheyenne on foot, where they could procure horses and start in pursuit of the robbers.

The stage moved off down the trail, and the officers took up their march home.

No one had noticed in the excitement that the black-eyed young man who had been a passenger had disappeared.

\* \* \* \* \*

Cheyenne Pete, with his chagrined and silent guards, must be left to continue their journey eastward with the stage, Dick Strong and his men to walk back to Cheyenne, and Jesse James and his gang to divide the gold at their camp, while we follow Jesse's rival of the road, Bill Woods, and his outlaws.

As they increased the distance between them and Jesse James their courage gradually rose, and, at the end of five miles, they slackened the pace of their horses.

"What's the plan now, captain?" asked Ned Stanley, riding up by the side of Woods.

"The plan is to rob a bank, hold up a stage or do anything there is money in. The fact is, I am broke and I've got to strike pay-dirt—and strike it quick."

"The next stage we rob, let's make sure Jess is not among the passengers."

"Enough of that. We would have cleaned out Jesse and the stage, too, only I was afraid these cursed horse thieves you've picked up out here would jump the game the moment the shooting began."

Stanley smiled at this, but said nothing. He knew that Woods had jumped the game before there was any shooting.

The outlaws had left Dead Man's Gulch and were riding along the main trail toward Cheyenne.

As they turned a sudden sharp bend in the trail they found themselves face to face with a score of well-armed and well-mounted men.

"Hands up, there! The first man who moves goes down!"

The outlaws were taken completely by surprise, and, before they could make a move to draw a



weapon, they were covered by the Winchesters of the entire crowd of men in front of them.

"Who are you and what do you want?" demanded Woods, sullenly.

"We are the Wyoming Regulators, and we want you and all your gang. There has been enough horse-thieving in these diggings, and we are going to put a stop to it. Get your ropes ready, boys!" replied the man, who seemed to be the leader of the regulators.

A sudden desperate plan to save his own neck occurred to Bill Woods, and the cowardly scoundrel lost no time in putting it into execution.

"Well, I guess you have made a mistake this time, old man. We are not horse thieves."

"Can you prove it?"

"I rather think I can."

"Who are you?"

"I am a Pinkerton detective, hunting for Jesse James and his band of outlaws, who are known to be hiding somewhere in this part of the country. I have full descriptions of the men we are after, and copies of the rewards offered by the Governor of Missouri. I also have my commission as a detective."

The outlaw was playing a bold game.

He was with the James gang when they killed a Pinkerton detective in Missouri. Woods had searched the pockets of the detective after he was dead. He had found and taken possession of the man's commission as a detective. Realizing that it might be useful to him at some time, he had kept it. The time had come when he could use it.

"Here is my commission and the other papers. These ought to convince you that I am not a horse thief."

The leader of the regulators advanced, and read the commission.

"This seems to be correct. Sorry to have held you up, captain, but every stranger in these parts must show his credentials."

One of the regulators here called the leader aside, and spoke a few words to him in a low tone, at the same time pointing to one of the rustlers Woods had picked up at Cheyenne.

Woods realized that something was up.

"Who are all these men with you, captain?" said the leader of the regulators.

"Men I have employed to help hunt down the outlaws."

"Well, for a Pinkerton detective, I think you have employed some very poor help. We have just recognized one of the men in your party as Jack Brody, the worst claim jumper and horse thief in the territory. He is one of the scoundrels we intended making an example of as soon as caught."

The regulator pointed to one of the outlaws, who

was keeping well in the rear trying to avoid being seen.

"That man is only a guide I picked up down the road. I know nothing about him. He told me he knew every foot of the country around here, and I employed him to act as guide. If he is a thief, I shall be glad to be rid of him."

Bill Woods, like the coward he was, would turn over one of his men to be hung to the nearest limb, and assist at the hanging if he could save his own neck by so doing.

"Say, cap, that's my horse the cussed scoundrel is riding now," cried one of the regulators, who had gone close to where Brody was trying his best to conceal himself.

It was fortunate for Woods that the regulators were only miners, comparatively new in the West. They had had little experience with the desperadoes who infested that locality, else they would have subjected him and his men to a much closer examination.

But the credentials of a Pinkerton detective, who was hunting Jesse James, was enough for them.

They had heard that the great bandit was somewhere in the territory, and they all feared him. They had robbers enough in their midst already.

These miners had suffered greatly at the hands of the thieves and rustlers, who stole horses and cattle and jumped claims, but did not have the courage necessary to rob stages and banks.

They had organized an amateur band of regulators to make an example of some of the thieves. Horse-stealing in that locality was a crime always punished with death, when the thief was compelled to stand trial at the court of Judge Lynch.

"String him up, cap! String him up!" shouted the regulators, gathering around Brody, who was now thoroughly frightened. He had heard the statement of Woods to the miners about being a Pinkerton detective, and the rustler knew he would receive no aid from his new leader.

"String him up, boys! We'll make an example of one horse thief!"

One of the miners ran forward with a rope, and, in a twinkling, Brody was dragged from the stolen horse he was riding, and was being dragged toward the nearest tree with a noose about his neck.

"Sorry to take your guide away from you," said the leader of the regulators to Woods; "but you see the boys have lost so many horses they are compelled to do something in self-defense."

"That's right," replied Woods, "string him up. I don't want any horse thieves about me. I assure you, gentlemen, I had no idea of the man's real character, or I should not have employed him."

"Just a word, men!" cried Brody, as the regulators paused to throw the rope over a limb. "That man there who tells you he is a Pinkerton detective



## CHAPTER CXX.

## JESSE JAMES A PRISONER.

is nothing of the kind. He is a thief. He was a member of the James gang until he tried to betray his leader. He says he is hunting the great bandit. That's a lie. He is running from him now. An hour ago he met Jesse James face to face, and ran away from him like a cur. You can hang me, but what I tell you is the truth."

"String him up! String him up!" shouted the regulators, who were getting impatient at the delay.

"Yes, string him up! I'll help you. The scoundrel is telling that lie in the hope of gaining time," cried Bill Woods, angrily. The scoundrel was beginning to fear he would not get off as easily as he expected.

With the stoicism of an Indian, Brody faced his captors and told them to pull away. With his own hands he adjusted the noose about his neck, so it would be sure to do its work swiftly and surely.

At a word of command from their leader, the regulators seized the rope, and in a moment the form of Brody, the rustler, was dangling from a limb close by the side of the trail.

His struggles soon ceased, and his body hung limp and lifeless.

Then one of the regulators wrote a placard, which read:

This will be the fate of all horse thieves who fall into our hands.  
THE REGULATORS.

This was fastened to the breast of the dead rustler, and his body was left hanging there, where it could be seen by all who passed along the trail.

"A d—d close call for me," muttered Bill Woods to himself.

"Now, captain," said the leader of the regulators, "we are ready to help you capture Jesse James."

"Good; we will soon have him a prisoner. Then, if you have any more horse thieves you want to put out of the way, me and my men will be at your service."

"That's a bargain," cried the regulators, in chorus.

"But one question before we start," said Woods. "If we capture the James boys, how shall we divide the reward? It is the reward my men and I are after."

"You can keep the reward for funeral expenses," laughed the captain of the regulators. "All we want is to rid the territory of robbers and thieves. You are welcome to all the rewards."

"Good; we will work together as long as there is a robber left in Wyoming. Now, to the camp of the James boys."

The regulators were soon mounted, and, led by Woods and his men, they galloped away in the direction of the camp of Jesse James and his men.

Weighted down with the gold stolen from the stagecoach, Jesse James and his men rode slowly back to their camp in the hills, knowing they would not be followed.

The success of the expedition was the subject of much joking on the ride. It was the best planned and executed piece of work they had ever done, and every man in the gang congratulated Jesse on his cunning and courage.

Reaching camp, the men dismounted, and gathered about their leaders—Jesse and Frank.

"Now, boys, we'll divide the plunder at once, and then we will hunt a new camp. That Sheriff Strong is likely to come prowling around here to-night or to-morrow. From all I have heard of him, he is not the kind of man to go the other way when he knows where we are."

"Can't the boys have a little fun before we undertake another job? Give them a chance to put some of the coin in circulation," suggested Dick Little.

"You can have all the fun you want, but don't get caught while you are at it."

Jesse then piled the gold taken from the stagecoach in a heap, and divided it into two equal parts. He and Frank took half, and the other half was divided equally among the members of the band.

"Now, boys, I want a word with all of you before we break camp," said Jesse.

The men gathered around him, and listened in silence.

"Five members of the band, led by Bill Woods, have turned traitors and left us. They are trying to operate on my reputation, and Woods is going to capture me and get the rewards, at least, he thinks he is. You all know the oath of the band. Are there any others who are dissatisfied and want to join Woods and the other traitors?"

An emphatic "No!" from every member of the band was the answer.

"Good!" said Jesse. "I think I can trust all of you."

"With your life," replied Dick Little.

"I let Bill Woods escape to-day, to give the regulators a chance to hang him; but if they don't do it quick, I shall bring him back and make an example of him. The man who tries to betray me dies. I'll give one thousand dollars to any man who brings Bill Woods or any of the other traitors into camp. Boys, remember your oath, and remember the fate of those who have turned traitor in the past."

"Now, we will scatter for a few days to throw the officers off our trail. When we get together again I shall have some work for you to do."

Jesse then told the men how to find the place he had selected for the new camp, and they rode away



singly, each man going in a separate direction, in order to baffle pursuit.

Jesse and Frank were the last to leave the camp. Before mounting their horses, they opened their saddle-bags and donned their best disguises.

"Now, old man, we'll have a little quiet fun up in Cheyenne before we do any more work," said Jesse.

When the two outlaws mounted their horses, they looked very little like the desperate bandits who had that morning robbed the richest laden stage that ever went out of Cheyenne.

They had put on clean white shirts, and fairly well-fitting clothes that were not more than six months behind the prevailing fashions of the East.

They had greased and smoothed down their hair, and their beards had been trimmed with a rusty pair of scissors carried for the purpose.

"I guess we are as fresh a looking pair of tenderfeet as you can find in the territory," said Jesse, surveying himself in a small and badly-cracked hand mirror.

"Oh, we'll pass anywhere! Every gambler in Cheyenne will be trying to get us into a game. They'll all pick us up for easy victims."

"Well, let's be going before some meddling detectives or regulators come prowling around the camp and strike our trail."

The James boys mounted their horses, and rode slowly out of camp. They made their way carefully down the gulch, until they reached the Cheyenne trail.

As they rode forward, they kept a sharp lookout to the right and left for enemies.

They knew that news of the stage robbery would spread rapidly, and that in a short time the country would be alive with officers and amateur detectives looking for the robbers.

They reached the Cheyenne trail without meeting any one, and turned their horses' heads toward the town.

"Not much danger of any one recognizing us as stage robbers while we wear these togs," said Frank.

"Hello! What's this?"

"It's that d——n traitor Woods," said Jesse.

"Where did he get all these men? Must have picked up all the thieves and rustlers in the territory."

"They are the Wyoming Regulators, I guess. It's just like that snake to fall in with them, and lead the gang of them to our camp, where he can make a sneak while they do the fighting."

"Do you think he will recognize us?"

"If he does, there'll be some fun."

"Will we attack all that crowd?"

"Go through them like a cyclone."

"Well, don't make any break; they may not suspect who we are. We can settle with Woods some other time."

"Too late now. They are on to us. Woods and Stanley probably recognize the horses."

The party of regulators were pulling up their horses on both sides of the road, in such a position as to block the passage of the two horsemen approaching.

Jesse and Frank had been riding slowly forward all the time, and were now quite close to the head of the column of regulators.

Bill Woods, they noticed, had cautiously moved back toward the rear, and was talking in an excited manner with a man who appeared to be the leader of the regulators.

In a moment the latter rode forward to the head of the column, carrying his Winchester in his right hand.

"Halt, there, and give an account of yourselves!"

Jesse and Frank James were little more than fifty feet away when the order to halt was given.

They were already prepared for it.

"Now, straight through them! Make every shot count!" said Jesse, in a low tone.

Quick as a flash the two outlaws took their bridal reins in their teeth, a pistol in each hand, and, putting spurs to their horses, they dashed into the midst of the regulators.

Their advance was, indeed, like a cyclone. It was entirely unexpected by the regulators, and in a moment the latter were thrown into the wildest confusion.

As the outlaws dashed forward, they fired right and left, and at almost every shot a saddle was emptied.

Yelling like demons, they went, and no man dared attempt to get in front of them and stop their mad rush.

As soon as he saw them coming, Bill Woods dropped to the ground, and concealed himself behind his horse. He fired a shot at the outlaw chief as they went by, but it went wild of the mark.

The captain of the regulators escaped the fusillade of shots unhurt, and was one of the few in the party who did not lose his head.

"After them, boys! After them! Don't let them escape! Shoot them down!" he shouted to his men.

He wheeled his horse about as quickly as possible, and, bringing his Winchester to his shoulder, fired a few shots at the bandits, who were by this time through the lines.

A few of his men rallied at his command, and started in pursuit.

In the excitement of the moment they did not notice that Bill Woods and his gang, who had volunteered to lead them to the camp of Jesse James, were going the other way as fast as their horses could carry them. They had no desire to attempt the capture of the great bandit chief.

By the time Jesse and Frank were safely through



the lines half the regulators had turned and started in pursuit. Several had been shot down, killed or wounded, while the two outlaws had so far escaped without a scratch.

"Don't let them escape!" shouted the captain of the regulators, as he spurred his horse forward and led the pursuit.

For half a mile up the trail the race was an exciting one.

The James boys turned and fired at their pursuers, as they rode until they had emptied their pistols.

Then Jesse dropped his bridle and began reloading his pistols as he rode. His horse slackened speed while he was getting out his cartridges, and the regulators began to gain on them rapidly.

The horse ridden by Frank had been struck by a bullet. The wound was a very slight one, but it made the animal frantic, and he was plunging ahead at full speed. Frank was unable to control him. At every bound he was gaining on the regulators, while Jesse was being left behind, and was almost overtaken.

But the great bandit chief had succeeded in getting one of his pistols loaded. He wheeled in his saddle for another shot at his pursuers at close range.

But this time he was a moment too late.

He heard the swish of a rope through the air, and before he could dodge to one side a noose had settled around his arms like the coils of a serpent.

Among the regulators were a number of cowboys, who had handled a lasso for years, and roped cattle until they were experts. One of them had quietly unfastened his lasso from his saddle as he rode.

As soon as he was near enough, he whirled the long rope around his head in a series of graceful, sweeping curves, then it shot forward like a snake, striking its prey, and in a twinkling the noose had settled down over the head of the great bandit chief, and before he could make a move his arms were pinioned to his side as firmly as if they had been held in a vice.

"Damnation!" ejaculated Jesse James, as he struggled to free his arms.

As soon as he saw that his throw had been true, the cowboy said something to his horse and the well-trained animal threw his fore feet forward as a brace, and stopped with a suddenness that would have unseated any but a most experienced rider.

One end of the long lasso was secured to the saddle of the cowboy. An instant after his horse stopped the rope was drawn tight, and Jesse was jerked from his horse. He was partly stunned by the fall, and before he could get on his feet the cowboy was drawing in the rope hand over hand, and the regulators had come up.

Jesse James, the great bandit chief, was a bound and helpless prisoner.

## CHAPTER CXXI.

## THE MIDNIGHT OATH—THE SHADOW IN BLACK.

Bill Woods and his little band of outlaws went into camp for a few days to rest and plan another robbery.

The men who had joined the band at Cheyenne, and knew something of the country and its criminals, were sent out to look for recruits. Woods wanted more men. With a large enough force he believed he could terrorize the entire section and rob when and where he pleased.

The following day he learned that Jesse James had been captured, and safely lodged in jail at Cheyenne. His joy over the news knew no bounds. He would have been glad if he could have obtained the big reward offered by the Governor of Missouri for the capture of the great bandit chief, but he did not have the nerve to earn it, and he knew it.

With his rival out of the way, Woods believed he could get together and lead a band of outlaws that could defy the authorities of the territory.

He wondered what had become of Frank James and the other members of the band, but he did not fear them so much now that their leader was behind the bars. In fact, he believed several other members of the band would join his gang, if he could find them. With a strong band of desperadoes in that wild country, Woods did not fear Detective Withers, the famous sleuth who was known to be in that section, and whom he suspected had been sent for by the stage and express companies to guard their property.

Three days after the attempt to rob the stage, the men who had been sent out to look for recruits for the band returned to report.

They had found half a dozen rustlers, who were hiding from the regulators, and were anxious to join the band for their own protection and for the better chance it would give them to carry on their stealing.

Arrangements had been made for them to meet Woods and the other members of the gang that night, just outside of Cheyenne.

The meeting-place was to be a graveyard, and there they were to take the oath that would make them full-fledged members of the outlaw band.

It was close to midnight when Woods and his men arrived at the appointed meeting-place.

A lonely and weird place it was, on the side of a hill, a mile from the town. The lights of Cheyenne gleamed faintly in the distance, while all around and about them were newly-made graves.

One of the first industries started by new towns in that section in those days was a graveyard, and in every instance they could be classed among the growing industries from the start.

There were no tombstones, but the fresh mounds of earth marked the graves very plainly.



Every man buried there had died with his boots on. It was an appropriate place to take an oath for deeds of blood and daring.

The recruits were waiting when Woods and his men arrived.

They were introduced to the outlaw leader, and he repeated to them the terrible oath they were to take.

Some of the men shuddered at it, or at the graves that looked so ghostly in the pale moonlight, but none of them backed out.

Every man took the oath, repeating it after Woods.

"Now, kiss a grave," he commanded.

Every man stooped, and pressed his lips to the cold, damp sod above a newly-made grave, and sealed the oath he had just taken.

"Now, let's get out of this, and get ready for business," said Woods.

"What is that, captain? Look there!"

Ned Stanley caught Woods by the arm, and pointed to the grave where the new men had just taken the oath.

The moon was low in the west, and a dark shadow had just fallen across the grave.

"Only a cloud, I guess," answered Woods.

"It may have been a cloud, but when I first saw it the shadow bore the shape of a woman, a woman in black. See, there it is again!"

The shadow flitted across the little mound of earth again, and then disappeared.

No cloud obscured the moon this time.

Bill Woods saw the shadow plainly, and he was trembling violently when it disappeared.

"It must have been a warning, captain," said Ned Stanley.

Woods made no reply. A shadow in black had crossed his path once before, and disaster had followed its appearance.

The shadow on the grave was a warning, and the outlaw knew it. He hurried away without looking to see whence the shadow came. He understood it well enough.

## CHAPTER CXXII.

### RESCUE OF THE JAMES BOYS.

The Wyoming Regulators marched into Cheyenne in triumph, with Jesse James a bound prisoner in their midst.

News of the capture spread through the town and the mining camps near by like wildfire. Miners left their work, and cowboys left their herds unguarded to go to town to get a look at the famous prisoner.

Bells were tolled, fireworks discharged, and a general jollification occurred.

The capture of an ordinary criminal in Cheyenne

was a matter of no interest, but Jesse James was not an ordinary criminal.

So long as he could be kept a prisoner in the town, he would draw bigger crowds to Cheyenne than a circus.

Sheriff Dick Strong returned soon after the arrival of the regulators with their prisoner, and Jesse James was turned over to him to be locked up in the town jail.

Then the citizens turned out, and, placing the captain of the regulators and the cowboy, whose skill with the lasso had made it possible to take the great bandit chief alive, on top of a stage coach, they were drawn through the main streets of the town in triumph.

It was a great day for Cheyenne.

Meanwhile the prisoner said nothing. His chagrin was too great for words.

After escaping unharmed so many times from trained detectives and officers, to be literally roped in by a lot of cowboys and miners was a bitter pill for the outlaw to swallow.

But he had been in tight places before and got out all right. He did not for a moment lose hope of soon getting out of his present predicament.

Sheriff Strong had been anxious to capture Jesse James himself, but he was too brave and big-hearted to think of withholding any of the credit from the regulators.

The sheriff placed a strong guard around the jail to make sure that the prisoner did not get away during the night, and then he cheerfully joined in the general celebration of the capture.

The prisoner made no attempt to escape. Blankets were placed in his cell, and he lay down, and slept as soundly as if he had been in his own camp in the hills. He knew the value of treasuring his strength and getting all the sleep and rest possible when the opportunity offered.

\* \* \* \* \*

But the excitement over the capture of Jesse James died out very quickly in Cheyenne, and the citizens went about their business as usual.

Sheriff Strong had notified the authorities of Missouri of the capture, and he was waiting to hear from them before doing anything with his prisoner. He was taking, as he thought, ample precautions to prevent the escape of the outlaw.

A special guard was detailed to watch the prisoner during the day, and at night a strong guard of well-armed men was constantly on duty to guard against the possibility of a rescue by the friends of the bandit chief.

Jesse took his confinement very coolly, and amused himself playing poker with Sheriff Strong, or the guards. He was confident that his men would soon come to his rescue, and he did not worry much over his temporary confinement.



When the citizens of Cheyenne had had time to recover from the excitement they remembered that Calamity Jane had been missing from her faro bank since the morning of the day Sheriff Strong started out to capture the stage robbers.

Her absence, however, attracted little attention, as it was not an unusual thing for her to disappear entirely for several days at a time without accounting for it.

Business went on as usual in Calamity Hall during her absence, because she had a manager and a faro dealer employed to run the games for her. True, the play was not so bright when she was absent, because gamblers would venture more under the spell of her flashing black eyes than at any other time.

Affairs had settled down to their normal conditions, and the jail was no longer crowded with visitors to see the star prisoner. Sheriff Strong, however, had not relaxed any of his vigilance while waiting to hear from the Governor of Missouri.

Two trusty men were constantly on duty at the jail during the day to watch the bandit chief.

The next event to attract public attention in Cheyenne was the arrival of a young minister from the East. He was a serious, clerical-looking young man, dressed in a ministerial suit of black. A jaunty little mustache adorned his upper lip, but he wore no jewelry of any kind.

The young clergyman announced that he had been sent out by a religious society in Boston to see what could be done to Christianize the Wild West. He had brought along a bountiful supply of tracts and religious literature for free distribution, and he announced that as soon as he had time to look around the town a little he would hold a series of religious meetings.

Some of the cowboys wanted to shoot holes in the clergyman's black silk hat and his bundle of tracts, by way of giving him a genuine Western reception, but older and cooler heads persuaded them to let him alone.

However wild and wicked the old Western miner may be, he never makes sport of religion or of a minister of the gospel.

One of the first things the missionary learned at the hotel was the story of the capture of the great bandit chief, Jesse James, and the fact that he was a prisoner in the town jail.

"I must go and see this wicked person, and give him some tracts to-morrow, when I have rested from my journey," said the parson, after listening to the story with evident interest.

The parson was waited on by a committee of prominent citizens in the evening. They welcomed him to the town, and offered to show him the faro banks, the Sunrise saloon and other places of in-

terest, but their well-meant offer was declined with thanks.

Then they told the young parson to make himself at home in the town, and call on them any time he did not get a square deal.

The following day the parson took a long walk, which ended at the jail. During the walk he met and talked with a suspicious-looking man, to whom he gave a tract. The man disappeared as soon as he got away from the young clergyman.

The two guards employed to watch Jesse James were sitting at the jail door when the missionary approached. They had heard of his arrival in town, and his visit was not entirely unexpected. The guards had hard work to suppress their smiles, but they treated the parson with great civility.

"Good-morning, good friends," was the greeting of the missionary, in a voice strangely soft and low.

"I understand you have a dangerous outlaw confined in your prison?"

"Yes."

"He is known as Jesse James, the Bandit King, the Knight of the Road, and other such terrible names, I am told."

"Yes, he answers to any of them, I believe."

"And he is a very wicked man, I suppose?"

"Very."

"Has robbed many persons of money?"

"Yes."

"And it is said he has taken human life?"

"He has killed a few detectives and other loafers, I believe."

"I suppose he swears terribly?"

"Sometimes."

"Terrible, terrible! He is in great need of spiritual grace. I have a tract here, entitled 'Never Too Late to Repent.' I must give him a copy; perhaps he will read it some time, and try to live a better life. Can I see this terrible prisoner?"

"Certainly; walk right in."

The guards led the way to the strong iron cell where Jesse was confined.

The big iron door was unlocked, and swung slowly back.

"Here's a preacher come to convert you," said one of the guards, and Jesse invited his visitor to enter.

The big door was closed and locked on the outside.

"Call us when you are ready to come out, parson," said the guards, and then they hurried away to enjoy a good laugh at the parson's simplicity in thinking he could reform Jesse James.

In five minutes the parson signaled that he was ready to depart. One of the guards hastened to open the cell door. The other remained on guard at the outer door of the jail.



"Did you give him a tract?" asked the guard, as he unlocked the door of the outlaw's cell.

"Two of them," the parson answered.

"Found him ripe for repentance, I guess."

"Yes; he is a changed man."

The cell door swung open, and the parson stepped out. In each hand he held a cocked revolver, and he had the drop on the guard.

"Step inside that cell, young man, and be quick about it."

"And give me your keys," said Jesse James, who was close behind the parson, and also held a revolver in each hand. When the young missionary entered the cell he must have been a walking arsenal.

The guard was taken completely by surprise, and made no attempt at resistance. He stepped inside the cell without a word, as Jesse James walked out.

His keys were taken from him, and in a moment the heavy iron door was locked on the outside, and he was a prisoner instead of the outlaw.

The pretended minister and the bandit chief hurried toward the front door of the jail.

"Hello! What's this?" exclaimed the guard on duty there, as he caught sight of Jesse James walking close behind the pretended parson.

He sprang to his feet, but before he could make a move to draw a weapon he was felled to the floor by a blow on the head with the butt of a heavy revolver in the hands of the meek and quiet-looking parson.

The guard was quickly disarmed, and then he was dragged back to the cell and locked in with his companion.

"Good-by, boys! You have been kind to me, and I am sorry to have to handle you so roughly. I won't forget you if I ever have a chance to do you a good turn."

Jesse James and his rescuer hurried from the jail. Their departure was not noticed by any one on the street, or about the building except the two guards, who were powerless to prevent it.

The pretended preacher led the way around to the rear of the building, where two splendid-looking horses, already saddled, were tied. The horses had been left there only a few moments before by the man to whom the preacher had given a tract while on his way to the jail.

The two men mounted the horses, and, putting spurs to the spirited animals, they rode out of town at a rapid pace.

Among others who saw them riding away was Dick Strong, the sheriff. He did not recognize his late prisoner, but he at once suspected that something was wrong, and he hurried to the jail.

The two guards locked in the cell soon informed him of what had occurred.

The sheriff got together a strong posse of men as quickly as possible to follow the trail of the outlaw and his rescuer, but by the time they were ready to start the bandit chief and his rescuer were miles away.

## CHAPTER CXXIII.

### A RIDE FOR LIFE.

"Boys, there is only one person in Wyoming who could have done this, and done it so well," said Sheriff Strong to his men, as they started in pursuit of the escaped bandit and his rescuer.

"And that person is——"

"Calamity Jane, the Queen of the Plains."

"Just my idea, Dick," said Captain Thompson, of the Wyoming Regulators, who had joined the pursuing party. "That is the most wonderful woman I ever heard of. I would like to know something more of her past history. I wonder what she is running a faro bank in Cheyenne for, when she is reported to be immensely wealthy?"

"There may be several reasons for that, but her rescue of Jesse James was a surprise to me. I thought Jane was dealing a square game with law and order."

"I think I know why she rescued the bandit king."

"Why?"

"She is in love with him. If a woman like Calamity Jane has any place in her heart for the tender passion called love I think the king of the road agents has found that spot."

"I guess you are right. They have been good friends for several years, and have always stood by each other through thick and thin."

"A woman will risk anything for the man she loves, and I think that is why Jane has taken this risk for Jesse James. She has not been at her place for three days."

"I wish I had known that sooner."

"Why?"

"Then I should have kept a stronger guard at the jail. I did not suspect that she thought of a rescue."

"But didn't she work that parson game on the boys just too nice for anything. No one else would have thought of the trick. What are you going to do with her when we capture them?"

"We have not captured them yet, besides the prisoner was rescued by a man. We have no proof that it was Calamity Jane in disguise."

"Oh, I see," said Captain Thompson, dryly, and he changed the subject. To himself he muttered: "If I ain't a bigger fool than I think I am there is a tender spot in Dick Strong's heart for Calamity Jane, and no court in the territory is ever going to get any proof that the woman released this prisoner."



The trail of the prisoners could be followed without difficulty, and the sheriff and his posse, all mounted on fresh horses, pushed forward at a rapid pace.

Dick Strong and Captain Thompson were right. It was Calamity Jane in the guise of a preacher just from the East, who had rescued Jesse James. She had planned it, and it was by previous arrangement that the horses were waiting for them close at hand when they got safely out of the jail.

Jesse James' first thought when he was safely out of the town was to find his brother and the other members of his scattered band. Once again at the head of his own men, he would defy all the officers and regulators in Wyoming.

From Calamity Jane he learned that none of them had been killed or captured since he left them, but of their whereabouts she knew nothing.

The outlaw chief knew that his men would not leave the neighborhood leaving him behind, so he expected to find them without trouble. He decided to go first to a spot that had been partly agreed upon as a camping-place before they broke up their old camp after the stage robbery in Dead Man's Gulch.

The fugitives slackened their pace when they were several miles out of Cheyenne, and then they lost considerable time in riding around in a circle to get their bearings. The country there was new to both of them, and they were compelled to move continuously. They had no fear of pursuit, in fact, did not believe they would be followed.

They had ridden to the top of a hill, and were looking about them to decide on the direction they wanted to go, and also in the hope of sighting some member of Jesse's band.

"What's that?" asked Calamity Jane, suddenly pointing to a cloud of dust rising from the trail a mile away to the east.

The practised eyes of the outlaw chief watched the moving dust cloud for a few minutes, until he could make out therein a number of shadowy forms moving rapidly toward them.

"It is a pursuing party, I guess. This is as good a place to fight them as we will find," said Jesse, quietly.

"No; we must not fight them. They outnumber us ten to one, and if Dick Strong leads them it would be a fight to the death. We must give them a race. We can win it. See, our horses are fresh now."

Jesse reluctantly agreed to make a race for liberty rather than fight, but it was plain that he would have preferred to make a stand and fight it out then and there. He was spoiling for a fight that would give him a chance to wipe out the disgrace of having been lassoed by a cowboy.

Wheeling their horses to the west, the fugitives put spurs to them, and then began a race for life.

The sheriff's posse soon reached the hilltop, and then they caught sight of the fugitives. With a yell, they urged their horses to their best speed, and the race was on in earnest.

The pace was a killing one for the horses, and the race could not last long.

The outlaw chief and his companion were entirely ignorant of the country, and were trusting to luck in the direction they had taken.

This time they had gone wrong. Without knowing it, they were riding full speed toward the steep banks of a deep, narrow river, which had a swift and treacherous current.

For a mile the race was unchanged. The fugitives were not gaining on their pursuers.

"What is that break in the ground ahead there?" asked Jesse James, pointing to the bank of the river, which suddenly loomed up to bar their way.

"Heavens! It is the river. We must turn aside here. The banks are high and treacherous. We cannot cross the stream."

They checked their horses for a moment, and started to turn to the right, but they saw that the stream was only a few hundred yards away in that direction.

Then they turned to the left, only to make the discovery that they had ridden into a horse-shoe shaped bend of the river.

It was too late to turn back now, and the shouts behind them gave warning that their pursuers were gaining on them. Much valuable time had already been lost.

"We must ride straight ahead, Jane, and trust to luck," said Jesse, grimly, as he realized the situation. "If we can't get across, they can't, and we can fight it out, if they close in on us."

"We can, at least, die together," said Calamity Jane, under her breath, as she set her teeth firmly and urged her horse forward.

Sheriff Strong's posse was close behind them now. They knew the river and the bend where they had driven the fugitives like rats in a trap.

When Dick Strong saw the fugitives urge their horses forward straight toward the river, he believed they were riding straight to certain death, and he shouted to them to stop. His shouts were not heeded.

Strong ordered his own men to pull up their horses in time, and then they watched the outlaw and his companion ride on to the river.

The bank of the stream was fifty feet high at that point. It was a frightful leap, and no horse could make it and live.

Jesse James reached over, and placed his hand on the arm of his companion as their horses ran side by side straight to the brink of the high bank.

"We must make the leap," he said, quietly.



"What are our chances?" asked Calamity Jane, and there was no trace of a tremor in her voice.

"Very few, I think."

"Then, let us make the leap together."

"Why together?"

"Because I love you, and when you are near something of the woman in me comes back to life. I would not tell you this only we are face to face with what seems certain death. It will be pleasant to die at your side and for you, even if I have to leave my life-work unfinished."

"We will make the leap together," said the bandit chief, in a low, quiet tone.

The precipice was only fifty feet away now.

Above the clatter of their horses' hoofs, the two riders could hear the shouts of their pursuers warning them of the danger.

The warning was too late.

With their hands clasped, both riders drove their spurs home at the same instant, their horses leaped high into the air and disappeared over the precipice into the river.

## CHAPTER CXXIV.

### THE NEW FARO DEALER AT CALAMITY HALL.

Sheriff Strong and his men turned their heads away with a shudder when they saw that the two fugitives were going to make the mad leap into the river.

The leap seemed to be certain death.

When the officers looked again, men and horses had disappeared. The leap had been made.

They dismounted, and crept forward to the brink of the high bank and peered over.

They saw only the mad, rushing waters of the swollen river, and the dark, murderous-looking jagged rocks that here and there rose above the surface.

"No one could make that leap and live," said Dick Strong, after a careful survey of the spot.

No trace of men or horses could be seen, and, finally, the officers went away, firmly convinced that Jesse James and his daring rescuer had met a frightful death in the river.

Two days later Calamity Jane appeared on the streets of Cheyenne very unexpectedly.

One of the first men she met was Dick Strong.

The sheriff stopped and rubbed his eyes to make sure that he was not dreaming.

He did not believe in ghosts, so he was not so much startled when the Queen of the Plains spoke.

"Where have you been for a week?" asked Sheriff Strong.

"Down to Denver to engage a new dealer and on some other business. Did you miss me?"

"Very much," answered the sheriff, with a peculiar smile.

"I am glad some one thinks of me. Come over to the hall to-night. My new faro-dealer will be on duty."

"I will come," said the sheriff, and they parted.

"I must have been mistaken," mused Dick Strong. "It was some one else who rescued Jesse James. No one could have made that leap into the river and live."

The return of Calamity Jane brought scores of miners and gamblers to Calamity Hall that night. The witchery of her smiles made their losses seem smaller. When she stood by the deal-table they placed their bets with a reckless abandon, and did not seem to mind when the dealer raked in their last chip.

Calamity Hall was ablaze with colored lights the night after the return of the queen, and hundreds of miners and prospectors were there to tempt fickle fortune.

The new dealer from Denver was at the faro table. He was a stalwart, broad-shouldered man, with a clean-shaven face.

To her friends and regular patrons Jane introduced him simply as Faro Jack.

The professional gamblers noticed that he did not handle the cards with the deft and expert movements that characterized the experienced faro dealer, but, somehow, luck was on the side of the house that night. Many of the players, apparently, cared more to win a smile from Calamity Jane than they did to win her gold at the card table.

The Queen of the Plains was dressed in the garments of her sex that night. She wore a close-fitting black dress, and her long, black hair hung down her back in wavy folds and ringlets.

A morocco belt around her waist supported two chamois-skin scabbards, in which she carried two pearl-handled and silver-mounted revolvers.

Many a rough miner feasted his eyes on her queenly form that night, and declared she was the prettiest woman living.

There were many strangers in Calamity Hall, but in the excitement of the gaming no one paid any attention to them.

One of the strangers, however, was conspicuous by a full and rather long, black beard, which almost entirely concealed his face.

A close inspection would show that the beard was false. The man was disguised.

For a time he took no part in any of the games. He appeared to be looking for some one, and was constantly passing from one part of the room to another, eagerly scanning the face of every one present.

At last the face of the new dealer at the faro table seemed to attract the attention of the stranger. He moved over to the table, and stood there for a while, closely watching the face of Faro Jack.



Then he sat down at the table, and bought fifty dollars' worth of chips. He placed half of them on the queen.

"Queen wins!" said the dealer.

The stranger started at the sound of Faro Jack's voice, but in a moment he recovered himself, and placed another bet. Again he won. He placed all his winnings on the turn of the next card and won again.

The disguised stranger was the first player that night who had had a run of luck. He placed a dozen bets in rapid succession and won them all.

There was a big stock of chips on the table in front of him. He soon began to grow reckless, and placed his bets with less care. Then fortune turned against him, and his chips were rapidly raked in by the dealer until he had only one hundred dollars' worth left.

He staked these on one card, the queen.

"You cannot win on the queen again. The queen understands your game," said the dealer, in a low tone, as he put the cards in the box.

The stranger looked up quickly at the words, but Faro Jack was busy with the cards and paid no attention to him.

Calamity Jane was standing just behind the dealer, and she, too, heard the remark. It caused her to look at the man in front of the table closely.

A peculiar glitter came into her eyes as she looked at him, and one jeweled hand dropped to the butt of one of her revolvers, and rested there. She glanced quickly at Faro Jack, but he was busy with the deal and, apparently, had not noticed that his remark had attracted any attention.

"Queen loses," said the dealer.

"It's a cheat; give me a fair deal," cried the stranger, excitedly, as he threw his chips down.

"You cannot win on the queen," said the dealer, quietly, as a smile played about the corners of his mouth.

The stranger's right hand went to his pocket like a flash.

But, quick as he was, Faro Jack was quicker.

Before the man with the false beard could draw his pistol the dealer had him covered.

"The queen is against you, Bill. Do you want to settle to-night?" said the dealer, in a tone so low that only the man for whom the words were intended and Calamity Jane heard.

The stranger sprang from his seat with an oath.

Faro Jack's finger was pressing the trigger of his revolver, when Calamity Jane leaned over and whispered to him:

"Leave him to me, Jack. Remember your promise. He is one of them. Let him go to-night. He will come back as the moth returns to the candle. He shall not escape."

The stranger did not hear these words, but he

backed away from the table until he was well into the crowd. Then he turned and hurried from the place.

"Place your bets, gentlemen!" shouted Faro Jack, and the game went on as though nothing had occurred.

## CHAPTER CXXV.

### A FATAL DUEL.

On his return from the trip on which his stage had been robbed of one hundred thousand dollars in gold by Jesse James and his men, Cheyenne Pete, the driver, and all the guards had been suspended by the stage company pending an investigation of the robbery.

These stage robberies had become so frequent, and they were all accomplished with so much ease, the officers of the stage company had become suspicious of their drivers and other employees. They could not understand why the armed guards sent along to protect the valuable express never made any resistance.

Cheyenne Pete was furious at his suspension. He made dire threats against the officers of the company who were responsible for it.

Pete—his other name no one ever knew—was one of that class of individuals known in the West as bad men. He was a hard drinker when off duty, and when under the influence of liquor he was a terror.

He was always well armed, and would not brook the slightest insult from any one.

Cheyenne Pete also had a record. He had killed men in Texas and Colorado. Men who knew him would hesitate to provoke a quarrel with him. He was quick on the draw, and was known as a dead shot.

Of one thing Cheyenne Pete often boasted, that was his honesty. He was proud of the fact that in all the wild, rough life he had lived he had always played a square game, as he termed it.

To be suspected of complicity with stage robbers and suspended from duty cut him deeply.

To drown his woes he went on a drunk, and painted the town red.

Cheyenne Pete knew something of the history of Calamity Jane, and he had been a frequent and heavy loser at her gaming tables.

He had recognized her as one of the passengers on his stage at the time of the robbery in Dead Man's Gulch. He also noticed that she had disappeared during the excitement, and had not continued on the trip.

Cheyenne Pete suspected that it was her cunning brain that had planned the robbery.

The games were running in full blast in Calamity Hall, with Faro Jack at the deal table, when Chey-



enne Pete, with a yell like an Indian, staggered into the room, and fired three shots at one of the lamps.

Several attendants ran forward to put him out, but he covered them with his revolvers and made them stand back.

"I've come here to see Calamity Jane, and I am going to see her," he shouted, making his way toward the faro table.

The crowd made way for him.

"Where is the queen?" he demanded of Faro Jack, with an oath.

"Not in just now. Join the game?" answered the dealer, quietly.

"Chips!" replied Pete, briefly, throwing a handful of gold dust on the table.

A stock of chips were placed on the table in front of him, and he placed his bets with an unsteady hand.

His money and chips were soon gone.

Then the drunken stage driver arose in a terrible rage.

"I might have known it," he shouted. "Calamity Jane is a thief. There is no chance to get a square deal in her place."

"You are a liar and a coward!"

Faro Jack spoke quietly; but there was a dangerous flash in his eyes, and when the stage driver attempted to draw his weapon he found himself covered by a gun in the hands of the dealer.

"You've got the drop. A man don't get any show in here," said Pete, sullenly.

"What show do you want?"

"A square deal."

"You had a square deal in the game, and lost your money."

"You called me a liar and a coward when you had the drop."

"You lie again. I pulled after you reached for your gun. Do you want a fight?"

"If I can have a show."

"You shall have it. I ought to shoot you down like a dog, but I'll give you a chance. I'll fight you for your insult of Calamity Jane."

Cheyenne Pete again reached for his gun, but Faro Jack covered him before he could reach it.

"Not in here. I'll meet you on the street tomorrow," said the faro dealer, quietly.

With an oath, Cheyenne Pete turned and staggered out of the place.

Calamity Jane had not been present while the trouble was in progress. When she entered the hall, a few minutes later, the games were all going on as if nothing unusual had occurred.

A number of miners and gamblers who were standing around the faro table when Cheyenne Pete and the dealer arranged the terms of their street duel had overheard all that passed between the two men.

They smiled in anticipation of the fight to the death, which they knew would take place as soon as the two men met on the street the following day.

Calamity Jane, mingling in the crowd around the tables, overheard the talk about the duel and learned all that had occurred. She said nothing to Faro Jack, but, slipping quietly out of a side door, she made her way alone to the cabin of Cheyenne Pete.

The drunken stage driver was lying on the floor fast asleep. His Winchester was lying at his side.

The Queen of the Plains, with a quick, stealthy movement, bent over and picked up the rifle. She examined the sights, adjusted them deftly, then, placing the gun back at the side of the drunken sleeper, she stole away as silently as a shadow, and five minutes later was back in her gambling-house watching the games.

People in Cheyenne who had heard of the proposed duel were astir early the next morning. They looked anxiously up and down the streets from time to time for the principals in the affair. Every man in town wanted to see the fight, but they did not care to get in range of stray bullets.

They had a long time to wait.

It was nearly eleven o'clock when Cheyenne Pete awoke from his drunken slumber. The first thing he remembered was that he had a bottle half full of liquor in his cabin. He picked it up, and drank every drop of the fiery stuff without removing the bottle from his lips. Then he felt better, and the scene at Calamity Hall the night before all came back to him. He remembered that the dealer had agreed to fight him, and, without a moment's delay, he picked up his rifle and started down the street.

Persons who were on the lookout hurried over to Calamity Hall as soon as they saw Pete leave his cabin, and told Faro Jack that the stage driver was hunting for him.

The dealer said nothing, but, a moment later, he picked up a Winchester rifle and went out on the street.

He had not gone three steps when Pete saw him and opened fire. He got the first shot before Faro Jack could get his gun to his shoulder.

The shot missed.

By this time Faro Jack had his gun to his shoulder.

Faster than men could count three shots were fired by each man without moving their guns from their shoulders.

Spectators peering through doors and windows saw a little speck of dust rise from the coat of the stage driver at each shot, and they knew he had been hit hard.

After the third shot Cheyenne Pete took two steps forward and his gun dropped to his hip.

He was staggering, but, steadying himself, he pulled the lever of his gun once more.



The shot was wild, and then he reeled, gave way at the knees, and sank to the ground, face downward.

Faro Jack turned and walked back into Calamity Hall unhurt.

Cheyenne Pete was picked up, and carried into the nearest house and laid on a table.

In a moment he opened his eyes and looked around.

"Is it a saloon?" he asked, in a whisper.

"Yes," and instantly a glass of liquor was placed to his lips.

He shook his head.

"Take me back to the street, boys; I'm done for."

They lifted him tenderly, and laid him on the ground outside.

His eyes opened again, and he looked down at his feet.

"Take 'em off, boys," he said, pointing to his boots. "It's for my old mother's sake. I promised her I would never die in a saloon or with my boots on, and I won't."

His boots were taken off, and with a smile of satisfaction on his lips, Cheyenne Pete gave a gasp and was dead.

He had kept his promise to his old mother, and died outside a saloon with his boots off.

He had been hit three times, and every ball passed entirely through his body.

"See this, boys!" said one of the miners, picking up Pete's rifle and pointing to the telescope sights.

They were set to shoot at one thousand yards. The men were not two hundred feet apart when the duel was fought.

"It's the work of Calamity Jane," said Dick Strong, who had arrived too late to prevent the duel.

## CHAPTER CXXVI.

### LOVE AND LIFE.

Jesse James and his fair rescuer, Calamity Jane, did not leap to certain death, as their pursuers supposed, when their horses carried them over the precipice into the river.

By a lucky chance the horses struck in deep water, where there were no rocks.

Jesse's feet were clear of the stirrups as the horses went over, and when they struck the water he slipped out of the saddle. His companion was close by his side, and he caught her around the waist with one arm, and pulled her off her horse.

The noble animals sank below the surface, and were carried some distance down the stream by the swift current before they rose again.

The bandit chief was an excellent swimmer. He was unhurt by the fall, and could easily keep his head above water.

The high bank at that point projected out over the stream some distance, and there was a narrow, sloping bank close to the foot of the cliff.

Supporting his companion with one arm, Jesse, with a few strong strokes, reached this bank, and they were safe from any chance of drowning.

Their splendid horses they were compelled to abandon to their fate. The noble animals were already some distance down the stream, struggling bravely against the swift current. There was little chance for them to reach the banks at a point where they could get out of the bed of the stream.

The first thing the outlaw did after reaching the bank was to examine his pistols. They were all right, and his belt full of cartridges was still around his waist.

They could not be seen by any person on the cliff above from which they had made the leap into the stream, so the pursuing party supposed they had met death in the river.

"It was a close call, Jess," said the Queen of the Plains, quietly, when they were safely out of the water.

"About as close as I have had in some time," the outlaw replied.

"Will we get out of here?"

"Of course we will get out."

"Jesse, I have something to tell you. One of my enemies still lives. I thought him dead until a few days ago, when he came to me himself and reminded me that there were thirteen of them."

"Was he in a hurry to die, that he came to tell you this?"

"No; he thought I would not recognize him after all the years that have passed since that terrible day at the mountain cabin. He wanted something to hold over me, so he tried to make me believe it was another, and that he alone could tell me who and where the man was. But he could not disguise his voice, and I recognized him."

"He still lives?"

"Yes; some strange impulse caused me to play with him as a cat plays with a mouse. The sight of him did not fire my blood, as it was fired when I met the first of them. He will come back to me as the moth returns again and again to the candle."

"Who is the man?"

"An enemy of yours as well as mine."

"His name?"

"Bill Woods!"

"My rival on the road. A traitor and a coward he is. Leave him to me. I have a debt to settle with him. The fate of those who break the oath of the James gang must be a warning to others."

"How are we going to get out of here?"

"I'll find a way out," replied Jesse; "trust me for that."

They crept slowly and cautiously along the nar-



row and slippery bank beneath the overhanging cliff for some distance down stream without finding an opening through which they could make their way out.

The bank began to grow more and more narrow, as they approached a sharp bend in the river, where the water ran with great velocity, and beat against the huge rocks in the bed of the stream with tremendous force.

"Well, this begins to look interesting," said Jesse.

Bidding his companion remain where she was, the outlaw crept forward a short distance on his hands and knees. A rift of light breaking through the cliff showed him a narrow opening through which it appeared possible to climb out of their perilous position.

It was the only chance, and they began the rough and perilous climb. After half-an-hour of hard work they reached the ground above just as darkness began to settle over the hills and plains.

"What shall we do now?" asked Jesse.

"Get back to Cheyenne as soon as possible."

"And get in jail?"

"No; I'll keep you out of jail. If we can reach the town before morning, I'll hide you away in a room until you can shave off your beard, and make some changes in your dress. Then I will give you a position in my bank, and introduce you as a new faro dealer from Denver. You can play the rôle well enough until you find a chance to communicate with Frank and the boys."

The fugitives reached Cheyenne on foot, just before daylight on the following morning, and in due time Faro Jack made his appearance at the deal-table in Calamity Hall.

## CHAPTER CXXVII.

### THE SHADOW AND THE SUBSTANCE.

When Bill Woods, in disguise, visited Calamity Hall, he left Ned Stanley and Clel Miller waiting for him in a secluded spot on the outskirts of the town.

Those two were the only members of his band left. The others had all deserted him, after some disastrous raids.

The outlaw had grown moody and desperate. Fate appeared to be against him in everything he undertook. Even in his dreams he was haunted by visions of a woman in black, who gave him no rest. The woman he saw in his dreams carried a long dagger in her hand, and on the blade of it in letters that gleamed like phosphorus he could make out the word "Nemesis."

Woods swore to murder Calamity Jane. He believed she was responsible for his bad luck, since he told her of his plot to betray Jesse James.

He resolved to risk a visit to Calamity Hall for a twofold purpose. He thought he might learn

something there of the fate of Jesse James since his rescue from prison, and he was also determined to shoot the Queen of the Plains, if a favorable opportunity offered.

Carefully disguising himself, he had entered the place while his men waited for him where they would not be discovered.

Woods had recognized Jesse James in the guise of Faro Jack, the new dealer, in Calamity Hall. Once he resolved to attempt the assassination of both the bandit chief and Calamity Jane, but he was foiled. Jesse James was too quick for him.

"What success?" asked Ned Stanley, eagerly, when Woods at last came back to the meeting-place.

"They are there," he answered, sullenly.

"They?"

"Jess and the woman. He is in disguise, but I recognized him. There is no use fighting against that pair; they are in league with the devil. The shadow of that woman crosses my path and blocks my game at every move."

"What shall we do?"

"Clean out the eastbound stage to-morrow, and then get out of this infernal country as quickly as possible."

Stanley laughed. He was thinking of their former attempts at stage robbing.

"We can do it this time," said Woods, who divined the thoughts of his confederate.

"Jess and his band are scattered, and the detective has left town. The stage leaves at daylight, with three boxes of gold. There will be only two passengers, and the driver is a new man. We'll meet it in the narrow gorge this side of Dead Man's Gulch. It will be easy this time."

"We can try it," answered Stanley, but his manner showed that he was not so hopeful of success as his leader.

The three outlaws turned to leave the spot.

"What is that?" asked Clel Miller, grasping Woods by the arm, and pointing to a black shadow that appeared to be gliding slowly away from the very spot where they had stood a moment before.

"Her shadow again," said Woods, in a hoarse whisper.

"This thing must end," he said, with a terrible oath, and, drawing a pistol, he fired three shots in rapid succession at the retreating shadow.

The sound of a woman's laugh was wafted to their ears on the night winds, as the roar of the shots died away, and, gliding on into the darkness, the shadow disappeared.

"Why is Calamity Jane on your trail?" asked Stanley, as the three outlaws hurried away.

"I do not know," answered Woods, sullenly, but he lied when he said it, and Stanley knew he was lying.



## CHAPTER CXXVIII.

## BILL WOODS' CAPTURE.

Daylight was just breaking over the eastern hills the following morning when the stage for Denver started out of Cheyenne on its long journey.

There was a new driver on the box, and a strange guard rode by his side.

Inside the stage were two passengers and three boxes filled with gold.

As the stage rattled down the trail toward Dead Man's Gulch, the driver and his companion kept a sharp lookout on both sides of the trail and ahead.

Stage drivers in that locality were always on the lookout for robbers, but these had special reasons for keeping their eyes and ears open that morning.

The amount of treasure inside the stage was less than was usually carried on the trip east, but there was enough of it to tempt any robber of modest taste.

The approach to Dead Man's Gulch was through a long, narrow gorge, bounded on both sides by big rock cliffs. In many places the trail was so narrow a man on horseback could not have passed the stage. In other places the gorge spread out to a width of thirty feet.

The sun was rising when the stage entered the gorge, but the tall cliffs on both sides shut out most of the light, and the driver could not see objects one hundred feet ahead very distinctly.

They were almost at the entrance of the gulch, and in one of the narrow, rock-bound passages of the gorge, when the figures of three horsemen suddenly loomed up out of the uncertain light directly in front.

The driver spoke a word to the man at his side and to the passengers inside the coach. Then he urged his horses forward, and, in a moment, they had come up to the three mysterious horsemen.

The driver held the reins in his left hand.

"Halt and put up your hands!" shouted the foremost of the three horsemen, as the stage came up to them.

It was now so light that the faces of the horsemen could be seen plainly.

They were all armed, and they had the drop on the driver and his companion on the box.

"Put up your hands, driver, and be cursed quick about it," repeated the leader of the three horsemen.

"Not this morning, Billy, not this morning!"

As the driver of the stage spoke, his right hand came up like a flash. There was a sharp report, and the right arm of the man addressed as Billy fell to his side, broken by a bullet from the driver's pistol.

At the same instant the two passengers inside the

stage leaped out with Winchester rifles in their hands, and began firing at the three robbers.

The driver passed the reins over to his companion, and leaped to the ground with a pistol in each hand.

"Put up your hands, Billy, or we'll riddle you."

"Not for you, Detective Withers. I'd rather die than surrender to you," replied the wounded robber, with an oath.

"I've got the drop, Bill; better put up your hand."

The stage driver was Detective Withers in disguise.

His companion on the box, and the two passengers inside the stage coach, were three of the bravest detectives in the West.

Withers had received warning of the proposed robbery in a mysterious manner, and he had made arrangements to checkmate the robbers.

He easily recognized Bill Woods as the leader of the three robbers.

The quick shot of the detective, which broke the arm of the outlaw leader, won the battle for the detectives.

At the first volley from the rifles of the two detective-passengers in the stage, Woods' companions wheeled their horses around and started down the trail at full speed. They knew Detective Withers too well to take any chances of a fight with him where the chances were equal.

A volley was fired at Stanley and Miller as they dashed away, but, by throwing themselves forward on the necks of their horses they escaped unhurt.

The continued firing frightened the horse ridden by Woods.

The animal reared, and, wheeling suddenly, threw his rider to the ground.

Before he could rise to his feet, Woods was overpowered and disarmed by the detectives.

His face was pale with rage, and the pain of his broken arm, but he made a show of bravado that he did not feel.

"The cards are running your way now, Mr. Detective, but the luck will turn soon, and I'll take care you do not get away alive the next time I get you in my power."

The detective laughed at the threat.

"You've tried to down me several times, but you failed. I guess you won't get another chance after I get you back to Missouri."

"You'll never take me there."

"Wait and see. You are no good as a robber in this country. Your attempt to play rival to Jesse James has failed."

Woods ground his teeth in rage at these taunts, but he kept silent.

Detective Withers detailed one of his men to act as driver, and the other as guard, and they went on with the stage to the first regular stopping-place,



where one of the company's regular drivers would relieve them.

With the other man he started back to Cheyenne with his prisoner.

Woods was suffering severely with his wounded arm, but he made no complaint.

His mind was busy with thoughts and plans of escape.

When they arrived at Cheyenne, the prisoner was taken to the office of the stage company.

The only doctor in the town was summoned at once to dress the outlaw's wound. After his arm had been dressed, Sheriff Strong was notified, and he came to take the prisoner to the town jail for safe keeping.

A few moments after Dick Strong entered the office, Calamity Jane came in.

She looked at the wounded prisoner with flashing eyes.

Woods caught sight of her as he was about to be led away to prison.

The sight of the woman suddenly aroused all the fury of his brutal nature.

The wounded outlaw was transformed into a wild beast by his unrestrained passion.

In Calamity Jane he recognized the shadow that was over his life.

For months she had crossed his path and thwarted his plans at every turn. He knew that he was the last of a fatal thirteen whom Calamity Jane had sworn to kill.

While she lived there was no escape for him.

With a cry of rage, like the scream of a maddened wild beast, Bill Woods suddenly sprang forward and stood facing the Queen of the Plains.

"You have come to gloat over me, have you?" he hissed through his clinched teeth. "I owe this to you—you devil!"

Before a hand could be raised to restrain him, the outlaw snatched a long gleaming knife from the breast of his leather jacket.

With a terrible oath he raised it aloft in his left hand, with the point aimed at the heart of Calamity Jane.

At the same instant a shadow darkened the doorway.

There was a flash, a shot, and Bill Woods, the outlaw, sank to the floor with a bullet through his heart.

The long knife fell by his side, and he was dead before he recognized the man who fired the shot.

Calamity Jane bent over the body an instant, a smile of satisfaction playing about her lips.

Then she knelt by the dead outlaw, and, raising her right hand, she said, as solemnly as if in prayer:

"My foster-father, rest in peace. I have kept my oath. The last of your murderers is dead. None escaped me."

The little party of stern-faced men present looked on in awed silence, until the woman rose from her knees.

She did not look at the body of the outlaw again.

A great change had come over the face of Calamity Jane.

The hard, stern lines around her mouth and eyes were melting away, and a look akin to womanly tenderness was creeping over her face.

She advanced to the group of men who were watching her in silence, and spoke to them in a voice so gentle they scarcely recognized it as hers.

"My work is done," she said, quietly. "It was terrible, but I had taken an oath to avenge his murder.

"Thank God, it is all over now. The desperate creature you have known as Calamity Jane is a woman once more, and never again will her hands be stained with human blood, unless it be in defense of her honor or her life.

"I shall leave you soon, and will say good-by now. Some of you have been my friends, and you know that Calamity Jane never forgets her friends.

"Good-by."

The woman, stern and unforgiving no longer, advanced and shook hands with the detective and the sheriff.

Tears came into her eyes as she said good-by. They were the first tears she had shed for years, and they seemed to wash out the last trace of the hard, cruel lines in her face.

The men shook hands with her warmly, and said good-by with real regret.

"Did you see the man who fired the shot?" asked Dick Strong of Detective Withers.

"Yes."

"Did you recognize him?"

"Yes."

"He was——"

"Jesse James, disguised as Faro Jack, the card-dealer at Calamity Hall."

## CHAPTER CXXIX.

### STEALING A GOLD MINE—THE ESCAPE FROM CHEYENNE.

When Frank James realized that Jesse had been made a prisoner, his first impulse was to go at once to his rescue.

But in a moment he realized that such a course would be worse than folly.

He could not rescue him alone from the band of regulators, and a fight against such odds could only result disastrously to himself.

The better plan would be to make sure of his own escape, get the band together, and rescue Jesse at the first opportunity. He had no fear of being able



to rescue him before he was taken away from Cheyenne.

It was past eleven o'clock, the night after Bill Woods' death, when the entire James gang gathered in Calamity Hall.

Some of them were playing cards, while others only stood around the tables and watched the games.

Jesse James, in the guise of Faro Jack, was at the deal table. Calamity Jane was in the hall, but she apparently took little interest in anything that was going on around her.

There was a look of gentleness in her face. All the old hard lines were gone, and in their place had come a look of utter weariness, almost sadness.

Frank James bought a few chips at the faro table, and played long enough to exchange a few words with the dealer, whom he had easily recognized. Then he got up and mingled with the crowds around the tables in various parts of the room.

Suddenly the front door of the place was thrown wide open, and half a score of armed men rushed in. They were led by Detective Withers and Sheriff Strong.

"We have come here for the James boys, and we are going to take them. Let every one else keep hands off, and they will not be molested," said Detective Withers.

"We know they are here. The house is surrounded, and every exit guarded. Now, boys, you had better come forward and give up without a fight. I've got you dead to rights this time."

Calamity Jane sprang to her feet, and the old hard lines came back to her face in an instant. Her voice rose above the din in the room, and commanded instant silence.

"You will not arrest my friends in my house, Detective Withers. I did not think you would do this."

"I must do my duty," answered the detective.

"Not to-night. You will arrest no one here. Calamity Jane has not forgotten how to shoot, and she never deserts her friends. Have you turned against me, too, Dick Strong?"

"I am the sheriff, and must do my duty," he answered.

Once more Calamity Jane appealed to the officers to go away quietly, but they refused.

Then she bent over, and whispered a word in the ear of Jesse James, who was still sitting quietly at the faro table.

Suddenly the outlaw leader leaped to his feet, and threw a deck of cards into the air.

"Here I am, come and take me!" shouted Jesse, drawing two pistols and covering Detective Withers and Sheriff Strong.

"Shoot him down, boys!" the detective shouted to his men.

The order was not obeyed. Before his men could

draw their weapons they found themselves looking into the muzzles of a score of revolvers in the hands of the members of the James gang.

The outlaws crowded close together, and placed themselves between their leader and the officers.

The latter were taken completely by surprise, and for a moment stood still, not knowing what to do. They had not counted on finding the entire band of outlaws in Calamity Hall.

Calamity Jane saw that the officers were at bay.

"There is a secret way out. It may not be guarded. Follow me. I am ready now to give up this wretched life for your sake," said the Queen of the Plains, approaching the bandit chief.

"But I cannot leave my men."

"They can follow us. I'll give the signal to put out the lights when we reach the door."

"Keep them covered, boys, and follow me out of here," Jesse shouted to his men, and, with Calamity Jane leading the way, he started toward the secret door.

His men followed, backing away from the officers, and keeping them covered with their revolvers.

"After them, boys! They shall not escape me again," cried Detective Withers, drawing his revolver.

But at that instant a shot rang out from the rear of the hall, and, in an instant, every light in the place was extinguished.

The officers dared not fire in the dark for fear of hitting one another.

The detective was furious at the delay.

He managed to find the front door after some time, and, telling his men to follow him, he led the way around to the rear of the house.

But again the detective was too late. His men on guard at the rear had been knocked down like so many tenpins by the butts of the revolvers of the outlaws.

Down the street there was a clatter of hoofs, and in the darkness the officers could see a score of men riding rapidly away.

Again the James boys and their men had escaped from a trap set for them by the shrewdest detective in the West.

The fleeing outlaws were scarcely out of sight when a sheet of flame burst through the roof of Calamity Hall. The place had been set on fire by Calamity Jane, who had given up her wild life forever, and gone away with Jesse James, the only man she had ever loved.

In a moment the fire was beyond control, and when morning came a pile of smoking ruins was all that remained of Calamity Hall.



**THIS WEEK! NEW CONTEST! ALL ABOARD! THIS WEEK!**

## THE DEEDS OF FAMOUS MEN!

Boys, the **PRIZE CHARACTER CONTEST** ends this week. Its success has been simply great. The entries have poured in upon us by the hundreds. *And they're still coming.* The entry list swelled up to many thousands. There were but twenty-two prizes, so everybody could not win one. Would you like to know who won the prizes? **WATCH THIS SPACE FOR THE WINNERS' NAMES.** They will all be published here, just as soon as the judges can examine the stories. This will necessarily take two or three weeks.

So successful was that Contest that the new one will be conducted on the same lines.

### VALUABLE PRIZES FOR THE BEST ARTICLES ABOUT FAMOUS MEN!

#### HERE IS THE PLAN:

Look up what interesting facts you can about any famous American—living or dead.

Chose anybody you please—Washington or Lincoln, Paul Revere or General Grant, "Bob" Evans or Admiral Sampson, or anybody else you want to write about. Then sit down and write an article about him. Tell all about him, the brave deeds he did, or the famous words he uttered, etc.

All of the best articles will be published during the progress of the contest in a special department of the **Jesse James Weekly**.

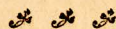
No contribution must be longer than 500 words.



#### REMEMBER:

Whether your contribution wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with the name of the writer.

To become a contestant for the prizes you must cut out the **Character Contest Coupon**, printed herewith. Fill it out properly, and send it to **Jesse James Weekly**, care of Street & Smith, 238 William Street, New York City, together with your article. No contribution will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.



**THIS CONTEST CLOSSES  
FEBRUARY 1, 1902.**

#### HERE ARE THE PRIZES:

**TWO FIRST-CLASS CAMERAS.**

**FIVE MAGIC LANTERN OUTFITS.**

**FIVE PEARL-HANDLED KNIVES.**

**TEN COMPLETE SETS OF PUZZLES.**

The two who send us the most interesting and best-written articles will each receive a first-class Camera, complete with achromatic lens, and loaded with six exposures each. Absolutely ready for use. For square pictures, 3 1-2 x 3 1-2 inches; capacity, six exposures without reloading; size of camera, 4 1-2 x 4 1-2 x 4 inches; weight, 15 ounces; well made, covered with grain leather and handsomely finished.

The five who send us the next best articles will each receive a "Sterling" Magic Lantern Outfit, together with 72 admission tickets and a large show bill. Each lantern is 10 inches high, 4 inches in diameter, with a 1 1-2 inch plano-convex condensing lens and a 3-4 inch double complex objective lens. Uses kerosene oil only.

The five who send us the next best articles will each receive a Handsome Pearl-Handled Knife. These knives have each four blades of the best English steel, hardened and tempered. The handle is pearl, the lining brass, and the bolsters German silver.

For ten next best descriptions, ten sets of the latest and most entertaining Puzzles and Novelties on the market, numbering three puzzles each, including Uncle Isaac's Pawnshop Puzzle; the Magic Marble Puzzle, and the Demon Outfit.

#### COUPON.

**"JESSE JAMES WEEKLY" CHARACTER CONTEST No. 2.**

Date.....1901

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# ABOUT FAMOUS MEN.

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Boys, do you see the announcement of the new Contest on the opposite page?

It's going to be a rattler, like the one that has just closed.

Everybody is to have another try at the valuable prizes offered. Don't miss this opportunity, but send in your article at once.

Following are some of the best articles received during the week.

Read them, and then send in your own!

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## Nathan Hale, the Martyr.

(By Frank Williamson, Jersey City, N. J.)

In all the annals of American history there is no man whose death calls forth greater sympathy than that of Nathan Hale.

In the southwest corner of City Hall park stands a bronze statue erected in memory of Captain Nathan Hale.

In 1776 when the American troops had evacuated New York and were encamped on Harlem Heights, Captain Hale volunteered to enter the enemy's lines on Long Island and secure for General Washington information as to the strength and disposition of their forces.

He secured the information, but while making his way back, he was caught and without even a trial was sentenced to death as a spy and on the scaffold was denied the use of a clergyman, and the letter he had written to his mother was torn in pieces by his executioner.

His dying words were, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." The British themselves couldn't help but to admire such patriotism.

In 1762 was built what is now the New York Hall of Records. It was used as a prison during the Revolutionary war. Tradition says that Nathan Hale spent his last day in a cell at the bottom of this building.

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## Ulysses S. Grant.

(By Victor Nieblas, San Francisco, Cal.)

Ulysses Simpson Grant saw his first service at Jefferson barracks, Missouri. The regiment was transferred to Louisiana the next year, 1845, he was commissioned second lieutenant and, with his regiment, joined General Zachary Taylor in Mexico. Here he took part in the battles of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma and all the battles of Scott's campaign.

In August, 1848, he was married to Julia B. Dent, and resigned from the service in 1854, having reached the grade of captain.

In 1861 he tendered his services to the government, and was appointed colonel of the 21st Illinois, and in August, brigadier-general of volunteers. In the early part of 1862 he captured Forts Henry and Donelson, and fought the battle of Shiloh.

In April, 1863, he won the battles of Port Gibson and Champion Hill, driving the enemy behind Vicksburg, which, after a long siege, surrendered July 4, 1863, with 30,000 prisoners. For this Grant was made major-general of the regular army, ordered to Chattanooga, and drove the enemy from Tennessee.

In March Grant was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-general, and given command of all the armies of the United States, with his headquarters with the army of the Potomac. He sent Sherman into Georgia, directed Sigel to penetrate the valley of Virginia, and Butler to threaten Richmond by way of the James, while he in person took the field against the army of Northern Virginia, under Lee.

After a hard struggle Grant captured Richmond and received the surrender of Lee's army at Appomattox, 9th of April, 1865.

Congress created for him the rank of general, and honors were showered upon him by a grateful public. In 1868 he was chosen President of the United States and in 1872 he was re-elected to the same office. After the close of this term of office he traveled in Europe for two years. Finding himself unable, with his income, to properly support his family, he became a partner in a banking house, in which one of his sons and others were interested. The bank failed and he found that he had been robbed by two of his partners.

Then only did he consent to write his personal memoirs, which he did in about a year's time, under the greatest of difficulties, for it was discovered that he had a cancer at the root of his tongue—in fact, that he was dying. But in spite of the pain and even agony, as well as weakness, the old soldier "fought it out all summer," and all winter, too, till the book which was to provide for his family was finished two days before his death, July 23, 1885.



**"Don't Give Up the Ship."**

(By Matthew Schwimmer, Chicago, Ill.)

In the war of 1812 one of the bravest American sea fighters was Captain James Lawrence. As I choose him for my hero I will try to explain his exploits.

One day in January 1813, Lawrence, who was then the captain of the *Hornet* was sailing along the coast of the West Indies near an island named San Salvador.

He had not sailed far when he met the English ship, the *Peacock*.

The *Peacock* challenged the *Hornet* to a fight and in a few minutes the battle began.

In fifteen minutes the *Peacock* was a wreck and then it surrendered.

The ship had scarcely surrendered when it was found that there was a leak in its hold. The officers and crew were hurried aboard the *Hornet* while nine men stayed on board to try and mend the leak.

Three men of the *Hornet* crew volunteered that they would help the men on board the *Peacock* and were put on board, where no sooner had they begun their work when the ship sank, carrying down the men on board.

Lawrence treated the English crew kindly, for he was much noted for his generosity, and then went back to Boston. There he was praised by all the Americans and was put in command of the *Chesapeake*.

He was just starting out of Boston when he received a polite challenge from Captain Broke of the *Shannon* to fight him.

Lawrence accepted the challenge and went out to meet the enemy. The *Chesapeake* since the fight with the *Leopard* was always called an unlucky ship, and so it proved to be.

At the beginning of the battle between the *Chesapeake* and *Shannon* Lawrence was mortally wounded, and while being carried below he cried out, "Don't give up the ship."

In about half an hour after the fight the *Chesapeake* was disabled and the British sprang upon the *Chesapeake*, shouting with joy while the American sailors hauled down their beloved flag and wrapped around it the body of their captain, for Lawrence, brave and generous, was dead.

The British carried him to Halifax, where he was buried, honored and respected by all true Americans.

**A Story About Washington.**

(By J. F. Blackburn, Indianapolis, Ind.)

One day, when Washington was a boy, he and some of his playmates were playing in a creek near his home in Virginia. As the boys say nowadays, they were ban-

tering one another on different things. Finally some one suggested that they should see who could carve his name the highest on the side of the stone bridge which arched over the creek. One tried it, then another and so on until it came to George's turn. With a strong mind and without the least bit of fear, Washington scaled the wall, and to the surprise of his friends who stood near and watched the feat which he accomplished they saw that he had reached a higher point than any of his friends, and he carved his name above all the rest. Thus, as I have said, he proved himself the superior of his friends and his name stands to-day above all of his time by deeds he did.

**A Story of Jesse James.**

(By B. Novak, Chicago, Ill.)

A story is told of Jesse which shows that he was not impervious to the appeals of the suffering.

One day he was riding in a sparsely settled region in Western Texas. Passing through a belt of timber along a stream, he came to the camping-place of an emigrant family. There a most distressing spectacle presented itself. The "movers" were people in indigent circumstances evidently. The old blind horse and poor mule which had drawn the rickety wagon seemed as if their days of toil were about numbered.

The man who had driven them had died there under a tree two days before. The woman was extended on the earth, almost in the agonies of death, and three children, the eldest not more than nine years of age, were crouched around, wailing piteously for something to stay the ravages of hunger. Jesse saw the miserable condition of the unfortunate emigrant family. He at once dismounted, examined the poor sick woman, administered to her necessities as best he could, and also gave the children something to eat from his own small store of supplies. He then bid the woman to be of good cheer and promised to come again before night. He mounted his horse and galloped away in search of assistance. Ten miles from the camp he found a physician and two miles further he found a coffin-maker. The first he sent to the lonely camp by the stream--the other he set to work to make a coffin. Then he found a man with a spring wagon and engaged his services.

With a supply of things of present necessity, he turned once more toward the camp. Arriving there he prepared the food and made the coffee himself for the unfortunate family. The physician came and prescribed for the sick lady. The undertaker brought the coffin, and the owner of the spring wagon came to remove the bereaved woman and her little ones to a place of shelter. The stranger was buried out there on the lonely prairie. The bereaved one and her orphaned children were carried to the house of a pioneer some miles away, and every want was bountifully provided for, and in a pleasant farmhouse she and her children soon called their own home.

She could scarcely believe her ears when she heard who it was who had aided her.



# Hunting and Trapping Department.

This department is brimful of information and ideas of interest to the young trapper and hunter. Write us if you have any questions to ask concerning these subjects, and they will be answered in a special column. Address all communications to the "Hunting and Trapping Department."

## Duck Hunting.

An enthusiastic duck hunter sends us the following interesting suggestions on duck hunting in general and a particular duck hunt he went on:

There are three ways of killing ducks—shooting from a blind, a sink-box, or a sneak-boat. If the day is fair and bright, and the wind "on our" shore we use the blinds, which are nothing more nor less than platforms built out in the water from some point of land on which the gunner can lie concealed by a screen of cedar bushes. He then waits his chances for a shot at the ducks, who, on such a day, are constantly on the wing. If, however, the wind is blowing toward the other shore, some strategy will have to be employed. Then we will have to use sink-boats, and although greater hardships accompany this method of gunning than any other, they are offset by the fact that it is the most exciting. Before the first peep of dawn we will be up and off. We must row across to the marshes or "flats" on the opposite side of the river, and each of you will be left with a dog and a gun in some coffin-shaped arrangement which appears to be just on the verge of sinking. You step in your coffin, which is nothing more nor less than a sink-boat, with considerable trepidation, for you are very fearful that the combined weight of you and your dog will cause it to disappear entirely. The dog is a splendid retriever, called a Chesapeake Bay dog, who will prove very useful during the day in collecting your "cripples" and dead ducks. You hear the rest of the party disembarking farther down the river, and you suddenly become imbued with the fact that it is very cold. Your teeth chatter, your ears and feet ache, and you shiver all over; you are about considering the advisability of halloing to the negro boys in the boat when—

Hark! what is that?

Have the demons of the other world been loosed, or is the bottom of the river fallen out, and this mighty noise caused by the falling of the waters of our bay down, down to China?

Neither; it is merely the ducks "waking up."

Not that we have any direct evidence that a duck ever goes to sleep, but it is by this title that the hunter dubs the mighty quacking the ducks make as they prepare to start for their early breakfast.

Now, as the sky becomes a little lighter in the east you begin to examine your bearings. First, an inspection of the sink-boat. It is a box seven or eight feet long, about four feet wide and three deep. You do not

know the fact, but it has a false bottom under which a ballast of stones or sand keeps the top of the box almost down to the surface of the water. A flange made of boards about a foot wide, placed at right angles with the sides of the box, serves to keep the box afloat, and the little waves from dashing in and giving you two or three inches of ice water to lie on instead of the comfortable pieces of old rag carpet in the bottom of the box. You now feel reasonably assured that you have not been left out there to drown, and the proximity of your game has chased away all thoughts of the cold, and you begin to look toward the middle of the river to see how long it will be before you can see to shoot.

Heavens and earth!

At least fifty ducks are gallantly riding the waves all around you within twenty yards of the box! You nervously grab your eight-bore, slip in two shells and cock both hammers. You pause for a moment and an awful suspicion creeps over you.

Yes, it is true. These ducks within such a tempting distance are of wood. They are your decoys, and were anchored in their positions at the same time the evening before that your sink-box was firmly fixed to terra firma with a large stone. You will never forget the look of disgust on your dog's face as you uncock your gun and replace it silently and carefully in the bottom of the box. But now comes daylight in earnest, and as you strain your eyes toward the middle of the river you see thousands of ducks there apparently sitting bolt upright in the water, wildly beating their wings to and fro as if in ludicrous imitation of an all-night "cabby" trying to keep himself warm. Every now and then a flock of from five to two hundred ducks leave the general assembly and flop sedately up the river in search of their breakfast. But here comes a flock toward you; they have evidently espied your decoys and are bent on discovering what these fifty ducks are eating so calmly. You crouch down in the bottom of the box, grab your gun, and await developments. How your heart beats as they apparently start to fly by you; with a sudden turn and a dart, however, they all "draw down" in a long line, for a duck never settles with the wind, but always against it—so that he can scent food or danger.

Now is your time! Up and at them! Your dog is as excited as you when you draw a bead on the leader and fire your left barrel at the luscious fellow just as he touches the water. He falls and the rest of the flock immediately start to pull up stakes, but just for a moment they huddle together preparatory to rising. Now is your chance. Give 'em your right barrel, which is



not "choked" as much as the left, and especially intended for shooting at a flock. By the holy poker! Two fall, one stone dead and the other a "cripple," who immediately starts for the middle of the river. But Rover sees it all, and with a splash he is after him. It does not take him long to catch the duck, who only has a wing broken, and in a trice he has brought him back and started for the two dead ducks. Three for two barrels is not a bad beginning for the day's bag, and you load up with a light heart and wait for your next shot. "But how about the sneak-boats you mentioned?" queries one of our listeners. "What do you use them for?"

Well, there is usually more work and less game with a sneak-boat or "bush-whacker," as it is known, than in either blind or sink-box shooting, but sometimes you have to use it or go without ducks. It is a large, flat-bottomed rowboat, with a screen of canvas or cedar bushes in the bow to conceal the gunner and his sculler. Some days when the sky is overcast and gloomy, or when it is snowing, the ducks will lie out in the middle of the river, and are seldom on the wing. Then comes the use of the sneak-boat. You put off from the shore with a man to scull your boat with a short steering oar. You can frequently steal up quite close to where a flock are floating in the river—for ducks are very inquisitive—and wait to examine this white arrangement which comes floating down with no visible means of locomotion. You are right on them when they rise, and usually have no trouble in bagging two or three ducks with your pair of guns. You are not always lucky enough, however, to get near them, and "sneaking" is very slow work.

## How to Keep Rabbits.

In a recent issue we told our readers how to make a simple and effective rabbit trap. Now this week we are going to tell our young hunters how to keep their rabbits if they want to, after they have caught them.

Rabbits should be provided with roomy hutches, having a grass run, deeply tiled below the surface, for at least six or seven inches, to prevent the chances of escape. Wire netting let into a trench, and afterward filled up with earth, stones and cinders, would be a more economical and equally successful method of keeping the animals within bounds.

During the winter months, of course, the hutches should be taken indoors, but be sure and put them in a place where, although protected from cold draughts, the bunnies may have plenty of light and fresh air. This is most essential to the health of all rabbits.

Let your pets have exercise, too, twice a day, if possible. It is downright cruelty to keep them always shut up in a stuffy hutch.

On fine days, even in winter, take the hutches out of doors for a while.

Do not keep more stock than you really want. Never overcrowd a hutch. On the other hand, it is all wrong to keep only one rabbit. Every animal should have as a companion at least one of its own kind, else its life is only one long spell of solitary confinement.

Abundance of clean straw should be provided, and the hutch frequently cleaned, except when the doe has a

young family, at which period the less she is disturbed the better. Set the hutch in such a manner that mice cannot get in, as they spoil the food and greatly annoy rabbits.

Variety in food is one of the first essentials in keeping rabbits healthy.

The following daily bill of fare is as good a one as we know:

Sunday morning—Roots and dry oats.  
Monday morning—Roots, crushed oats and tea leaves.  
Tuesday morning—Soaked oats.  
Wednesday morning—Barley, dry.  
Thursday morning—Roots and dry oats.  
Friday morning—Hay and roots.  
Saturday morning—Dry stuff.  
Sunday evening—Mash of potatoes and meal.  
Monday evening—Bread and meal mash.  
Tuesday evening—Dried crusts of bread.  
Wednesday evening—Meal and bread mash.  
Thursday evening—Soaked peas.  
Friday evening—Meal and potato mash.  
Saturday evening—Bread crusts.

This, in summer, must of course be varied by garden stuff, carrots, turnips, grass and clover.

Remember, rabbits are fastidious creatures, and will never touch moldy or stale food unless much pressed by hunger.

The query is frequently made: Do rabbits need water? They will sip water, or milk-and-water, when thirsty. In a wild state, where they have their choice of juicy, green food, they seldom touch water, but in a hutch it is different. So, offer your bunnies a drink of water, morning and evening, but never leave the pan in the hutch.

When the young are born, do not look at them for two or three days, and then it must be merely to remove a dead one, if there be such a thing.

A piece of cruelty to which rabbits are often subjected by thoughtless boys is that of lifting them by the ears without placing a hand under them to support their weight. No kind-hearted lad will ever be guilty of such a practice.

In conclusion, success in keeping rabbits depends on several things, and if you are going in for bunnies you would do well to remember them; they constitute a liberal education in the care of rabbits.

1. A good, clean, well-arranged and roomy hutch.
2. Freedom from leakage and cold winds, but exposure to light and sunshine.
3. A well-selected diet, given regularly at least twice a day.
4. Occasional exercise outdoors.

## EXCHANGE COLUMN.

(Notice.—This column is free to all our readers. We cannot be responsible for transactions made through notices in this column. All offers must be strictly exchange offers, and no "for sale" advertisements, or exchanges of firearms, explosives, or dangerous or worthless articles will be printed. Address all communications for this column to "Exchange Column.")

Dave B. Barr, 216 La Fayette avenue, Bellevue, Ky., will give 10 foreign stamps for each Pan American 1 or 2 cent; 15 for all above 2 cents.

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